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Apathy in Action: Baby Boomers' Attitudes towards Product Placements in the Mass Media

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**APATHY IN ACTION:
BABY BOOMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRODUCT PLACEMENTS
IN THE MASS MEDIA**

A Thesis

**Presented to the
School of Communication
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha**

by

Nicole M. Schmoll

January 2005

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

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for the degree Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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**APATHY IN ACTION:
BABY BOOMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRODUCT PLACEMENTS
IN THE MASS MEDIA**

Nicole M. Schmoll, MA

University of Nebraska, 2005

Advisor: Dr. Michael Hilt

Product placement, or the paid inclusion of branded products into entertainment media, is a highly lucrative and popular practice. While much research has been done on the attitudes of college-aged individuals towards the practice of product placement, none had been conducted on any other populations' attitudes towards product placements in media besides television and motion pictures. The current quantitatively-focused study employed a 23-question survey instrument to examine a baby boomer enumeration's attitudes towards product placements in film, television, music videos, video games and internet web sites. Chi-square analysis, tests of correlation, ANOVA and simple means comparison were used to analyze the results. The majority of subjects approved of product placements in all media formats examined. When disapproval of product placements was voiced, it was towards the inclusion of alcohol or tobacco products in entertainment content aimed at children. Overall, the research in this study strengthened and extended the findings of previous studies to a baby boomer population.

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“For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6). If this thesis is of any value or worth then I must first give credit to my Father, from whom all wisdom and knowledge come. Thanks to God for graciously giving me not only a relationship with Him and eternal life through His Son, Jesus, but also intelligence and the ability to write.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Product placements have been defined as “the paid inclusion of branded products or brand identifiers through audio and/or visual means, within mass media programming” (Karrh, 1998, p. 31). The use of product placements in the mass media is exploding, and has become an extremely lucrative business (Hart, 2003). What was at one time a sporadic practice based on bartering agreements is now a vehicle for “multi-million-dollar integrated promotional campaigns” (Karrh, McKee, & Pardun, 2003, p. 138). Long having been established in the motion picture industry (Turcotte, 1995), product placements are becoming increasingly common in video games, music videos and novels (Chang, 2003; Karrh, 1998; Shanahan, 2001). Faced with the reality of a segmented audience, advertisers are embracing product placements as a more effective way to generate brand recall and ultimately, influence purchasing decisions than traditional advertising (Karrh, McKee, & Pardun, 2003).

A review of research on the ethical acceptability of product placement reveals that the majority of studies have focused on students as a sample population for, among other reasons, their perceived higher movie-going frequency than other age populations (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Gould, Gupta, & Grabner-Krauter, 2000; Karrh, Frith, & Callison, 2001), and that the majority of respondents have no ethical objections to product placements nor do they see it as a deceptive practice (Baker & Crawford, 1995; DeLorme, Reid, & Zimmer, 1994; Gupta & Gould, 1997; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993; Ong & Meri, 1994).

Despite the growing body of research concerning the practice of product placement and its ethical, legal and theoretical ramifications, researchers indicate that product placement raises ethical concerns (Baerns, 2003; Balasubramanian, 1994; Davidson, 1996; Russell, 2002; Wenner, 2002) and that more diverse age populations need to be surveyed for their reactions to and interaction with product placement (Avery & Ferraro, 2000; Karrh, 1998). An ideal population to study would be adults aged 40 – 58, also known as baby boomers (El Nasser, 2004; Fry, 2004; Harmon, Webster, & Wyenberg, 1999).

At nearly 80 million strong, baby boomers make up one third of the population, control 20% of the nation's financial assets and hold 50% of all discretionary income (Fry, 2004). In addition, prevailing attitudes of this population suggest that they favor self-sufficiency, hard work and having an optimistic view of the future (Fry, 2004; Gusman, 2004).

This age group is important to advertisers for many reasons including, but not limited to, the amount of discretionary income they possess (Strum, 2002), as well as their favorable attitude towards spending and consumption (Haynes, 2004). As marketers argue for more products to be directed towards baby boomers (Crain, 2004), it is of value to know what this critical segment of consumers thinks about product placements since they are an increasingly popular advertising practice.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Product Placement and the Social Construction of Reality

Product placement is not new. In fact, some scholars argue that it is simply a return to the practices upon which the mass media is founded. As early as the 1920s product placements were used in radio programs, “traditional product placement within programs routinely occurred, with advertisers censoring dialogue and manipulating ideas to their advantage” (Kretchmer, 2004, p. 42). The practice of product placement within the feature film industry traces its origins to the 1930s when U.S. tobacco companies paid movie stars and athletes to endorse their brands (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003). It was not until the 1970s that placements shifted from bartered agreements to paid inclusions (Balasubramanian, 1994). In the 1980s, product placement agencies emerged as negotiators of agreements between advertisers and moviemakers. Today, product placement is a booming \$1.5 billion business (Galician, 2004; Karrh, 1998; Karrh, McKee, & Pardun, 2003; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003; Mortimer, 2002; Turcotte, 1995), due in part to the revitalization of the movie-going experience and growth in DVD sales (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003).

In addition to film and television, product placements can be seen in a variety of other entertainment formats. Gupta and Gould (1997) state that product placements can occur in TV, radio, music videos, video games, novels, plays and songs. Product placement is becoming an incredibly popular trend in music videos, as hip-hop artists

embrace the practice as a means of establishing “street credibility” (Chang, 2003, p.18). According to Chang, every record label is pursuing paid product placements, largely because placements can drive down the production cost of a video by 25% to 50%. In a music video, an artist is not just selling his or her song, but a lifestyle as well. A realistic portrayal of a desired lifestyle logically showcases products that someone wanting to live that lifestyle in the real world would need to possess. Chang writes that this trend is “especially true in the image-conscious hip-hop world, where the link between artists and brands is much more pronounced” (2003, p.18). Marketers sometimes favor placing their product in music videos over films because the shorter turnaround time for videos allows them to respond more quickly to potential audience demand.

The concern by advertisers and creative producers for product placements to enhance the reality of an entertainment medium, whether it be movies, television, music videos or video games, raises questions about how this practice can be viewed in light of the Social Construction of Reality theory. This theory has three main tenets at its core: “Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 61). Social Construction of Reality theory argues that each individual is born into a world where others teach them what reality is. These ‘others’ can be parents, religion, teachers, friends or even, as researchers Lang and Lang (1984) have posited, television. Perhaps more than any other medium, television’s use of close-ups and live coverage of events gives viewers a sense of familiarity with distant or otherwise unknown people and places (Lang & Lang, 1984). Pioneering research done by Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) offers just one example of a study proving that

children learn about how other people live by watching television. Additionally, George Gerbner's content analysis of violence portrayed on television during 1967 and 1968, performed for the Media Task Force's Nonviolence Commission National Survey, revealed that most Americans' conception of violence was based solely on what they saw on television (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). These studies offer just two examples where television can be seen as a constructor of social reality.

Researchers Solomon and Englis (1994) extend the Social Construction of Reality to include product placements. They argue that product placements are a form of reality engineering constructed by advertisers, saying, "audiences who treat mass media images as reflections of reality may be said to have their realities engineered by marketers" (p. 1). Solomon and Englis further argue that any environment where consumption of information occurs is a possible vehicle for reality engineering through product placement. As viewers watch a movie, television show or music video, or even play a video game, they may be unaware that what appears to be a reflection of reality is really a manufactured construction reflecting a change of goods and services between an advertiser and a celebrity or creative producer. In this sense, Solomon and Englis claim that product placement is at its core a deceptive practice since the consumer does not realize they are being persuaded and therefore may not be able to counterargue its effects.

Understanding Product Placements

Solomon and Englis' (1994) argument is demonstrated in the fact that product placements are quickly becoming a fixture of video games. Today, games are a multi-sensory, virtual reality experience and Americans' favorite leisure time activity, surpassing even movie going and reading books (Nelson, 2002). Americans spent an average of 64 hours playing video games in 2002, which is double what was spent with games seven years ago (Delaney, 2004). There is growing excitement by advertisers to test the waters of video and computer gaming with product placements. Activision, a leading game maker, got advertisers such as Samsung, Nokia and Powerade to spend \$10 million on in-game product placements in 2003, and expects its advertising revenue to grow to \$100 million by mid-2005 (Banerjee, 2004). Since the average individual engages with a game for 30 hours before relegating it to a dusty shelf, advertisers are given much greater exposure to their target audience than through a television sitcom, music video or even film.

A recent Wall Street Journal article reported that, "People who play games are particularly attractive to advertisers because they spend longer, more intense periods of time with the product than they do with TV" (Delaney, 2004, p. A8). Advertisers are actually adjusting their marketing philosophies to include product placements in video games. Major marketers are shifting their resources away from television and print media, choosing instead to pour an increasing amount of money into video game advertising. And it is paying off, as DaimlerChrysler recently discovered when it was able to obtain names and email addresses from 250,000 interested customers by offering

them a free downloadable video game called *Jeep 4x4: Trail of Life* on its web site (Delaney, 2004). They ended up selling hundreds of the limited edition Wrangler Rubicon to individuals who downloaded the game.

In games, placements can be auditory, visual or both simultaneously and can be woven into the rewards of the program. *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX*, for example, offers the gamer the ability to attract additional ‘sponsors’ with each level completed (Nelson, 2002). Other games including *The Sims Online*, released in 2002, feature McDonald’s and Intel, and Play Station 2’s *Devil May Cry 2*, displays characters dressed in the clothing brand, Diesel (Hille, 2003).

Gary Ruskin, executive director of Commercial Alert, a consumer watchdog group, called the practice of placing ads in games “inherently deceptive, because they don’t disclose when ads are ads” (Banerjee, 2004, p. 3). Interestingly however, one research study found subjects’ attitudes towards the inclusion of product placements into their games to be a positive, non-deceptive experience that served to enhance game-realism (Nelson, 2002). Whether or not it is viewed as a deceptive practice, Nielsen Interactive Entertainment’s unveiling of a standardized measure of in-game advertising effectiveness is an indication that product placements in video games are here to stay (Banerjee, 2004).

Product placement has even made its way in novels, an area previously thought untouchable by intentional advertising. Shanahan writes that the “book industry has been one of the teeny little corners of the media free of sponsors’ plugs and pitches” (2001, p. 38), until now. Author Fay Weldon changed that with her book, *The Bulgari Connection*,

where Weldon was paid an undisclosed sum by Bulgari to feature the Italian jewelry company in its own tailor-made novel (Shanahan, 2001). The book was actually a “sponsored novel” which involved more than mere droppings of products into a preconceived plot. Bulgari hired Weldon to craft a novel for them that would coincide with the opening of their London store (Nelson, 2004). Bulgari’s CEO Francesco Trapani approached Weldon with his idea for a commissioned novel because he wanted to find a better, more dynamic way to communicate the Bulgari brand to its target audience (Nelson, 2004). More recently, another British author, Carole Matthews struck a deal with Ford of Britain to change the heroine’s car in her best-selling novel, *The Sweetest Taboo*, from a Volkswagen Beetle to a Ford Fiesta for the paperback edition of her book (Wernle, 2004). This move was greeted with consternation among literary circles (Murray, 2004).

Regardless of which medium they occupy, more often than not product placements are intentionally placed into a movie, television program or novel in exchange for payment of some sort. Turcotte (1995) argues that most placements benefit all parties involved and do not always require payment:

Although product placements can and do occur by chance, more frequently they are the result of agreements between corporate America and Hollywood which are intended to benefit both parties. The corporate marketers desire the unique, high-profile exposure of their products and the resulting implied endorsements. The studios, on the other hand, benefit through associated cost-reductions, corporate-sponsored movie promotions and occasional fees. (p. 1)

There is actually a highly organized industry consisting of placement agencies and program producers that work together to place branded products into films, television shows, music videos and a variety of other entertainment formats (Balasubramanian, 1994; Turcotte, 1995).

Karrh (2003) writes that the major movie studios have their own departments for negotiating product placement opportunities, but that they also use agencies as middlemen between themselves and the brand owners at times to secure various placements. Movie industry executives report that the majority of placement deals are arranged as reciprocal contracts where brand owners agree to fund promotions for the film they appear in (Mortimer, 2002). Placement practitioners are quoted as saying that most films today do not want cash in return for placements – they would rather have a good opening weekend, generated of course by well-funded promotional campaigns (Mortimer, 2002). Whether through the funding of promotional campaigns or through strictly monetary agreements, the majority of placements are performed in exchange for some form of compensation. FedEx, for example, did not pay to be featured in the 2000 movie, *Castaway*, directed by Robert Zemeckis, but it did supply airplanes, trucks, packages and uniforms for the movie (Barton, 2000) and FedEx CEO Fred Smith was an investor in the movie's production company (Abramovich, 2000). These provisions certainly reduced production costs associated with the film.

While most product placements are paid for, some arise out of creative discretion or random chance. The quintessential example of unpaid-for product placement is

Reese's Pieces candy, which rocketed to stardom after appearing in Steven Spielberg's *E.T.*:

The father of modern product placement was a wrinkled alien...tempted out of hiding with a pack of little-known American sweets called Reese's Pieces. The confectionery brand's sales skyrocketed by an alleged 66% after the release of the picture. (Mortimer, 2002, p. 22)

Time has revealed that the candy's placement occurred by chance and was not arranged before hand for a price. Bob Gamgort, president of Masterfoods USA, which produces the candy, commented that their best placements cost them little or nothing. He goes on to state that "TV and movie producers are looking for products with images that align with their own goals – or sometimes they want to place a product just because they like it" (Peebles, 2003, p. 36).

Gamgort describes a placement of M&M's candy in the President's jet on the popular television drama, *The West Wing*, as a decision made by the show's producers to mimic reality. The real *Air Force One*, in fact, carries customized boxes of M&M's on board. Another example of unpaid-for product placement is the inclusion of a Saab automobile as a focus of an entire episode on the hit sitcom, *Seinfeld*. Elke Martin, director of Corporate Communications for Saab, USA stated that "it would be very difficult to quantify that [placement] since a 30-second commercial in the show costs \$500,000" (ERMA Web site, paragraph 11). In this instance, Saab is fortunate that *Seinfeld* incorporated their product free of charge, because the cost would probably have been too prohibitive to consider if they had to pay for it.

A final example of an organically-derived product placement comes with *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle*, released in July 2004. In this film, two young men drive around for hours, encountering a variety of obstacles as they try to get to White Castle for some “sliders” to satisfy their marijuana-induced craving for cheap hamburgers. An article in the Wall Street Journal reports that “having its name splashed across theaters in a summer movie aimed squarely at its core young male customers could be worth millions of dollars to White Castle” (Marr and Vranica, 2004, p. B2). However, White Castle took a gamble with the placement, as it holds the possibility of connecting the brand with recreational drug use. White Castle paid nothing for the placement; rather the producers approached them with the idea.

Interestingly, these instances are not indicative of the majority of product placements. The number of product placements is on the rise at many network channels (Stilson, 2003) and a number of filmmakers use product placement agencies when preparing their film budgets (Hart, 2003). Hart writes that filmmakers seek out product placement agencies to aid them in securing effective product placements because it drives down production costs:

The costs for renting or buying items can be in the thousands of dollars. But aside from the advantages of obtaining free goods, the production company will use a brand if its contribution to a scene makes sense. (2003, p. 21)

Filmmakers and television show producers are looking for placements that fit nicely within the framework of the existing storyline and enhance a show’s sense of reality.

As discussed earlier in relation to the Social Construction of Reality theory, the placement of branded products in films, television series and other forms of mass media entertainment, can often be used to generate a sense of realism for the viewer (Morton & Friedman, 2002). Jay May, president of *Feature This!* product placement agency stated:

The real world is immersed in brands. In the old days, brands on film used to be generically termed Acme Inc. That wouldn't work for audiences these days.

Films need to reflect real life. (Mortimer, 2002, p. 22)

The presence of branded products in sitcoms such as *Friends* or *Seinfeld*, or in films such as *Wayne's World* (1992) and *Die Another Day* (2002) make the storylines and characters more believable and make them easier for audiences to relate to. By contrast, popular fantasy films like the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001, 2002, and 2003) directed by Peter Jackson, or George Lucas' *Star Wars* epics, contain no product placements because branded products would be woefully out of place in an alternate universe. In films that portray an entirely separate reality, the inclusion of branded products would actually disrupt the flow of the storyline and harm the narrative itself.

The desire for placements that "fit" as well as agreeability to increased income flow are causing leaders in the entertainment industry to give advertisers more creative control over the placement of their brands into films and television shows. The entertainment industry is increasingly blurring the line between creative material, which originates from the mind of the artist, and is not the result of a reciprocal agreement between the studio and an advertiser, and advertising content, which is the paid inclusion of placements by an advertiser or agency.

New Technologies and Ethics of Product Placement

Going beyond mere product placement into an ethical grey area, Universal Pictures is actively seeking opportunities for advertisers to co-create films and television series, and is encouraging marketers to set aside portions of their research and development funds for the creation of scripts (Stanley, 2003). Fox Cable got into the practice as well, when they featured Coors Light in the inaugural season of the series, *Lucky*, as the sponsor of a fictional poker tournament within the show. The tournament was replete with the famous Coors twins and shots of characters enjoying the beverage (Romano, 2004). These types of product placements seem to cross an ethical boundary:

What started as a quiet practice that arguably ‘naturalized films’...has become more blatant as it has become integral in budgeting, planning, and promoting films and television programs. The basic practice has always raised ethical issues of deception, corruption of the artistic process, and overcommercialism. (Wenner, 2002, p. 15)

Essentially, product placement has moved from a vehicle for enhancing the realism of mass media images to a vehicle for the commodification of entertainment. Since the practice does not notify consumers in instances where product placements are paid inclusions into mass media material, many believe it to be a deceptive, and by extension, unethical practice. The realm of ethics deals with issues of right and wrong. In regards to product placements in the mass media, the ensuing discussion on the ethicality of product placements concerns itself with whether the practice of product placement is at its core, deceptive, and therefore unethical.

The co-creation of entertainment by advertisers and creative producers represents both positives and negatives for all parties involved. Entertainment companies facing rising costs favor the alliance because it drives down production costs. In an effort to maximize the effectiveness of a placement, manufacturers and advertisers prefer the increased control over brand portrayal that being a “co-creator” affords them (Karrh, McKee, & Pardun, 2003). Universal’s approach is also appealing in that it presents new and effective ways to get products in front of consumers in today’s segmented consumer market. Product placement offers advertisers a way to circumvent the TiVo trend of viewers to simply screen out all the 30-second spots that interrupt their favorite programs (Stanley, 2003). As the audience draw of network television declines, product placement is being relied on as an innovative marketing tool capable of reaching an increasingly fragmented consumer base. Research has shown that product placement in movies, however subtle, can influence a consumer to buy the product shown in the movie (Morton & Friedman, 2002).

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal reports that the number of DVD players has doubled in the past two years to 48 million. It goes on to report that “the slide in viewership comes amid an explosion of gadgets that give viewers other ways to use their TV” (Nelson & Peers, 2003, p. A1). Additional reports from other sources show that the number of devices such as TiVo are now in three million homes (Tynan, 2004). As the traditional network audience tunes out, advertisers seek to place their products in the programs viewers are tuning in to. Product placement is arguably more effective at getting a product in front of the viewer’s eyes than traditional 15-, 30- or 60-second spots

because it does so at a nearly subliminal level *during* the content the viewer has chosen to consume. The viewer cannot escape this kind of advertising by changing the channel and may even be more likely to buy a product because they see a character they identify with use it in a realistic setting (Karrh, McKee, & Pardun, 2003).

If advertisers can weave their products *into* viewers' most watched and beloved programs in a seamless fashion, they may be able to persuade consumers to buy their product without even making a recognizable pitch. This new breed of advertising, which attempts to influence consumers on an almost subliminal level, is the subject of ethical concern (Atkinson, 2003; Baerns, 2003; Davidson, 1996). It should be noted, however, that research on the effects of subliminal advertising has not yet revealed any proof that subliminal messages have any affect on influencing viewers' purchase or consumption decisions (Beatty & Hawkins, 1989).

Advertising is widely recognized as a form of persuasion, defined as "symbol manipulation designed to produce action in others" (Brown, 1958, p. 299). Brown makes a distinction between persuasion and propaganda by delineating propaganda as a persuasive effort that benefits the persuader but not the persuadee. As a form of advertising, product placement often employs the transfer and testimonial devices of propaganda. Coined by Lee and Lee (1939), transfer carries the prestige of something respected or admired over to a specific object. In the case of product placement, advertisers desire that their products be given the most positive script treatment possible, so that their brands will be associated with contentment, happiness or prestige in consumers' minds.

The testimonial device has been perfected by advertisers, who use the technique to influence purchase decision. Lee and Lee (1939) defined the testimonial device of propaganda as having a well-known and either admired or hated person communicate something positive or negative about a specific product or person. Infomercials employ this strategy as they use celebrities to showcase certain products, and give glowing reviews about their functionality or value. Advertisers hope that viewers' affection for the celebrity hosting their product will generate enough interest and trust by the viewer, in the product, to purchase it. Product placement, if done in a manner which features the brand both audibly and visually in a positive setting, is the ultimate infomercial because a celebrity is seen using or talking about the product, in a real life setting and yet no disclaimer of advertising content needs to be given.

Some research has even suggested that viewers prefer product placement over traditional advertising as a method for learning of new products. A recent Wall Street Journal article noted that, "Some consumers who ignore TV commercials, it turns out, will eagerly play with a commercial dressed up as a game" (Delaney, 2004, p. A8). Nebenzahl and Secunda's (1993) research found that a college-aged student sample actually preferred product placement as an advertising tool because it was less obtrusive than traditional advertising. The thought from their study seems to be: *if you can sell me your product without annoying me in the process by interrupting my entertainment, then by all means, do!* As a matter of fact, research studies have confirmed that the only time viewers generally have any ethical objections to product placement is when the placements are of a controversial or ethically-charged nature such as tobacco, alcohol or

in other countries, such as China, fatty foods (Gupta & Gould, 1997; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003).

Information Processing, Persuasion and Product Placement

Research reveals that the type of program a brand is placed into can determine the effectiveness of the placement on generating recall among viewers. For example, product placements in sitcoms have been found to generate higher brand recall than reality shows (McClellan, 2003). In addition, the type of placement has been shown to influence the effectiveness of placements being recalled by consumers.

Russell (1998) has proposed a three-dimensional framework of product placement from which to understand the various types of placements that can occur. She suggests the following three types of placements: visual, verbal and plot placement. Visual placement, or “screen placement,” simply integrates the brand visually into the background of a television or film scene (1998, p. 357). An example of screen or visual placement is seen in scenes from the hit sitcom, *Seinfeld*, in which boxes of cereal are shown lined up, in open cupboards in Jerry’s kitchen. Character interaction was regularly scripted around Jerry’s apartment and tiny kitchen, and as characters interacted with each other, or grabbed something out of Jerry’s fridge, boxes of cereal could be seen placed in the background. A verbal placement refers to the brand being mentioned in a dialogue (Russell, 1998). Examples would be where characters refer to or discuss a certain product or brand but the product is not shown visually. A final form of placement categorized by Russell is plot placement:

The product becomes part of the plot, taking a major place in the story line or building the persona of a character...[and] consists of any combination of visual and verbal components and can be conceived as the degree of connection between the product and the plot. (1998, p. 357)

Another example from television comes from an episode during the fourth season of *Seinfeld* titled, *The Junior Mint*. Throughout this episode, a character named Kramer discusses his desire for Junior Mints, is shown eating the candy, and in the midst of a surgery he is viewing, accidentally tosses one into a patient's chest cavity, opened up for heart surgery (Wild, 1998). Here, the product not only receives audio and visual recognition, but occupies the climatic moment of the episode and develops Kramer as a character who would do such an outrageous thing.

Daytime television is actively pursuing product placements as well, with ABC making a deal with Revlon to weave the cosmetics company into an ongoing plot development. The deal features Revlon as a rival to lead character Erica Kane's Enchantment Cosmetics company, on ABC's *All My Children*. Revlon reportedly spent somewhere between \$3 million and \$7 million to run ads during the soap opera commercial breaks. In return, it was featured in the plot for three months, with frequent on-air mentions (Stanley, 2002). An additional example of plot placement from the feature film industry is the 2000 drama, *Castaway*, starring Tom Hanks, in which FedEx was a character in the movie, complete with "package-eye view" camera angles (Friedman, 2004). Of this type of prominent placement and plot involvement one scholar wrote, "This strategy is part of a trend of corporations attempting to move beyond

advertising and other familiar marketing strategies to more firmly embed their brands into the culture” (Friedman, 2004, p. 174). Businesses are seeking new ways to generate loyalty to their brands and product placement has become a viable part of the marketing mix for many corporations.

A final example of plot placement from film comes from the Christmas hit, *Elf*, released in November 2003. In it, Will Ferrell plays a human raised by elves at the North Pole. Ferrell’s character, “Buddy,” works in Santa’s Toyshop assembling toys for Christmas with other elves. The toy that Buddy and his fellow elves are shown assembling? Ohio Art’s “Etch a Sketch” toy. In addition to a rather lengthy scene featuring elves assembling the dismantled Etch a Sketches, the toy plays a more prominent role in the movie as Buddy uses it to craft a to-do-list as well as to send a thematically critical goodbye note to his family near the climax of the film. Ohio Art’s stock rose from \$11.75 to \$15.63 a share due to the placement of the Etch a Sketch toy in *Elf* (Phan, 2003). The role of the Etch a Sketch toy in *Elf* compliments the developing storyline and shows how effective plot placements can be in driving purchasing decisions by consumers.

It is important to note that plot placements do not guarantee this level of success every time they are used. Basing her proposition on information processing research done by Pavio, Russell theorizes that “individual differences in style of processing moderate the effectiveness of the different types of product placement” (1998, p. 358). In effect, selective perception is applicable to the viewing of product placements; not everyone will cognitively process, nor actively respond to placements in the same way.

Russell (1998) suggests that individuals who process information visually will have greater recall of visual placements whereas individuals higher in audio processing will be more affected by verbal placements.

Recent research on the practice of product placement has actually challenged the body of evidence claiming to measure the effectiveness of product placements. Russell raises the argument that such research assumes a linear relationship between memory and attitude that does not exist in persuasion literature (Russell, 2003). Russell argues that recall alone may be a poor predictor of persuasion and calls for more research to be done on product placement effectiveness that incorporates measures for both memory and attitude. After the passing of a few years, Russell undertook such a study herself and concluded:

The results indicate that the relationship between memory and attitude is not straightforward; merely because a person remembers seeing or hearing a brand in a show does not mean that his or her attitude towards that brand will change.

(2003, p. 314)

Russell states that valuable research has yet to be conducted that examines the effect of product placements on memory and/or attitude change towards emotionally-laden placements such as alcohol or tobacco. She argues that “public policy makers [need] to closely monitor the blurring of the line between entertainment and marketing, particularly when it comes to harmful and otherwise regulated products” (2003, p. 315).

The Paradox of Product Placement

Despite its growing ubiquity across media formats, there is actually an interesting paradox inherent to product placement. In order for a product placement to be effective, the brand must first be known to the viewer and second, must be woven into the fabric of the script enough to prevent itself from being seen as obtrusive to the audience. It is almost as if a product placement must operate at a subliminal level in order to be effective. Ephron addresses the paradoxical nature of product placement:

Product placement only works for established brand names that are easily identified. Lesser-known brands are dummy brands to the viewer...The infuriating paradox of product placement is that if you notice, it is bad. But if you do not notice, it is worthless. It is such a narrow line that either the advertiser or the viewer feels betrayed. (2003, p. 20)

Ephron's paradox is easily proved through an analysis of a show broadcast by NBC called *The Restaurant*. In his article on the show, Scott Donaton describes the show as being "rendered nearly unwatchable by product placements that are aggressive, intrusive and clunky – anything but the seamless blend necessary to make them bearable" (2003, p. 14).

In one particular episode of the program, the restaurant manager, Rocco, slumps in a chair after a draining day and reviews the restaurant's financial statements. In the process, he realizes that more money is being spent than is being brought in. Donaton writes about a particularly frustrating scene involving Rocco:

Suddenly he announces, 'I know what I'll do. I'll have Stacy apply for a line of credit from American Express' Open: The Small Business Network.' The camera cuts to a shot of Stacy at AmEx's Open Web site. Spare us. The placement is crass and phony and stops you cold. It's almost impossible to enjoy the show after that. (2003, p. 14)

The product placement in this example is so obvious and so invasive to the show's narrative, that it actually has a potentially negative marketing effect for the product. It is unsuccessful because it has lost its deceptive, almost subliminal element.

In his article on product placement in the Canadian film and TV industry, Hart describes the audience's desire for realistic product placement:

It wasn't so long ago that a cereal prop in a kitchen scene would be a phony blue box designed by the art department, with the word 'cereal' written on it. Try that today and your film or TV audience will laugh at your production. Consumers want realism. (2003, p. 21)

If viewer realize they are being sold to, they will no longer desire to watch the show, so the challenge of effective product placement is to stage such a realistic placement that viewers hardly notice its presence.

An example of product placement that works can be found in Bravo's new hit show, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* in which the five leads take a different male candidate each week on a makeover that includes shopping stops at retailer outlets tied to the program. Donaton writes that *Queer Eye* "mixes in products without ever stomping on the story....The camera reveals quick glimpses of storefront signs but doesn't linger

lovingly on them” (2003, p. 14). In *Queer Eye*, the creative content of the show is left undisturbed by awkward product placement and yet, advertiser’s products are still exposed to viewers in a prominent fashion. *The Restaurant* and *Queer Eye* demonstrate the paradox of product placement. If product placement is allowed to drive creative content and storylines in a noticeable manner, the audience will notice and spurn it. Successful product placement compliments an existing storyline with real-life products that the audience can relate to. In the case of *Queer Eye*, it could be argued that product placement is a win-win situation for both the show, by enhancing its element of reality, and the advertisers, by getting their product in front of viewers in a realistic setting.

The Question of Acceptability

Given the success of product placement in shows such as *Queer Eye* and movies like *Elf*, it is easy to see why an increasing number of companies are allocating more of their advertising dollars towards funding product placements in various forms of media. But one factor companies must consider as they decide whether or not to include product placements in their advertising mix are the ethical ramifications of its deceptive nature. While most studies find respondents have positive attitudes towards product placements, except in the case of ethically-charged products such as alcohol or tobacco (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Karrh, McKee, & Pardun, 2003; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003), critics of product placement charge the growing practice with weakening moviemaking creativity (Miller, 1990; Wenner, 2004), and deceptively luring consumers into purchase decisions through covert tactics of persuasion (Atkinson, 2003; Baerns, 2003; Davidson, 1996).

Those who defend the practice of product placement as ethical (Turcotte, 1995, 2004) argue that studios regulate themselves, making proactive decisions not to include branded cigarettes, for example, in films marketed towards children. Interestingly, although tobacco companies claim to have adhered to a voluntary, self-imposed ban on paid product placements since 1990, a study on the appearance of branded cigarettes in the 250 top-grossing movies released between 1988 – 1997 reveals that 85% of films reviewed contained both screen appearance and actor endorsement of major cigarette brands including Marlboro, Camel, Winston, Lucky Strike and others; and that 4% of those appearances occurred in G-rated movies (Sargent, Tickle, Beach, Dalton, Ahrens, & Heatherton, 2001). Using industry-regulated ethical measures then, seems to be a questionable defense of the overall ethical acceptability of the practice of product placement.

Because placements are not clearly labeled as advertisements to viewers, there are some who consider it to be an unethical practice. One area where the ethical debate over product placements can readily be seen is with celebrity endorsements of pharmaceutical products. In March of 2002, Lauren Bacall appeared on the NBC “Today” Program, telling Matt Lauer about a good friend of hers who became blind from a disease known as macular degeneration. Bacall then mentioned a drug, Visudyne, which had been shown to be an effective treatment for the disease. What Bacall failed to mention was that she was paid by Novartis, the Swiss drug company that produces Visudyne, to do a plug for the product on national television (Petersen, 2002). Ethical questions have been raised about the deceptiveness of drug companies using celebrity endorsements without making

the public aware that the celebrity is being paid for the message they're spreading (Turner, 2004).

Another area raising ethical concern is the use of a virtual placement process known as 'live-video insertion system,' or, as its creators affectionately call it, "ELVIS" (Elliott, 1999). The system is currently being used to place virtual billboards into baseball and football games broadcast on the Internet and television. These billboards are invisible to live spectators watching the sporting event, and are only visible to viewers watching the broadcasts they are placed in. Creators of ELVIS are seeking to expand the use of the system to place electronic product images into syndicated television shows. The process is being criticized for increasing the commercialization of entertainment culture, and further blurring the line between advertising and programming (Elliott, 2001).

Balasubramanian (1994) addresses product placements as a type of "hybrid message" or, mix of advertising (that is paid for), and publicity (which is free), that "attempt to influence audiences for commercial benefit using communications that project a non-commercial character;" and goes on to state that "under these circumstances, audiences are likely to be unaware of the commercial influence attempt and/or to process the content...differently than they process other commercial messages" (p. 30). Balasubramanian emphasizes that positive paired-associations are uniformly sought by advertisers between their products and potential plot attachments. Given Bandura's (1977) *modeling paradigm* that viewers model behavior learned through the

mass media, advertisers want viewers to see their branded products presented repetitiously and modeled by celebrities or characters in a consistently positive light.

Indeed, positive paired-associations are so critical in advertisers' minds that they will sue a studio for breaching a contract where positive product placement is supposed to be included into a film but is cut before release. Reebok made a deal with Tri-Star pictures to feature a mock Reebok commercial in the film *Jerry Maguire* (1996), and sued the studio when the agreed upon scene was cut from the final version of the film (Mortimer, 2002). Reebok won the settlement, taking home \$10 million for its trouble. It is not surprising then, when Balasubramanian writes that "many placement sponsors exercise control over their message by imposing stringent guidelines on movie producers to avoid negative paired-association" (1994, p. 38)

Ethical concerns are also being raised over the scripting of products in novels. Fay Weldon's novel, *The Bulgari Connection*, which was discussed earlier, generated international distaste for its obvious references to the Italian jewelry company, which many people in the literary community resented. Shanahan reports that while Weldon's contract only required her to mention Bulgari a dozen times, she chose to go beyond that and give the company top billing by including its name in the title. Author's Guild President Letty Cottin Pogrebin commented on Weldon's novel saying, "I feel as if it erodes reader confidence in the authenticity of the narrative" (Shanahan, 2003, p. 38). Bulgari paid Weldon to be mentioned in her story and therefore, it is advertising. However, Weldon did not have to disclose this information to the reader up front. So, unless the reader learns of the deal between Weldon and Bulgari from some other source,

he or she is left to assume that the choice of Bulgari was an authentic creative decision originating in the mind of the author. The placement of Bulgari in Weldon's novel is argued to be deceptive by some, and as such, raises ethical concerns.

Gupta and Gould (1997) write that some critics of product placement "perceive an element of deception in that product placements are not labeled as advertisements and therefore may be viewed as 'hidden but paid' messages" (p. 38). Bulgari's connection to Weldon's novel qualifies as a "hidden but paid" message and explains why it has generated controversy around the globe. *The Bulgari Connection* is merely a touch point for the ethical questions swirling around the growing practice of product placement. Scholars, business people and marketing professionals have expressed a variety of opinions on the ethics of product placement. German scholar Barbara Baerns wrote that:

Advertising and programme content is increasingly being breached, not only in radio and television. In newspapers and magazines, too, the grey area between editorial text and advertising is spreading. This practice willingly tolerates violations of binding legal agreements and professional codes of ethics.

(2003, p. 101)

As a novelist, while Weldon is not held to a code of ethics, in the manner that a reporter for a newspaper is, she has indeed crossed what many considered to be a line separating advertising and literary content.

In his article entitled "When Does Creativity Become Deception?", Davidson describes product placements as falling into an "ethical spectrum" (1996, p. 12). He argues that most placements are benign, such as substituting a can of Coke for a can of

brown soda, and therefore, though deceptive, pose no threat of harm to the viewer. There are other placements though, that are unethical because their deceptiveness may place the viewer in a position of harm. He offers the following as an example of unethical product placement:

A pharmaceutical manufacturer must not dress an actor in a doctor's gown to appear in its advertising about some over-the-counter drug because viewers could be deceived into believing they were receiving medical advice rather than a promotional message. (1996, p. 12)

He goes on to list infomercials as another example of harmful deception and says that in between the extremes of benign and harmful, a number of placements exist that are subject to ethical judgment.

Some critics of product placement are not as forgiving as Davidson. In October of 2003, Ralph Nader's Commercial Alert consumer watchdog group filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission and Federal Communications Commission charging that major television networks deceive the public by failing to disclose product placements (Atkinson, 2003, p. 12). Commercial Alert Executive Director Gary Ruskin explained the group's objection to product placement in his statement that, "part of our argument is that there should be separate context. Television enterprises have to disclose when ads are ads" (Atkinson, 2003, p. 12). Ruskin goes on to argue that just as there are rules for Internet searches and for magazine advertising regarding placements, so there should also be rules for television.

The Federal Trade Commission has already established that some types of product placement are deceptive and not legally permissible unless clearly labeled as advertisements, while others are benign and therefore do not require such notification. Federal Trade Commissioner Mozelle Thompson wrote:

We've established in a number of infomercial cases that it's a violation of the FTC Act for an advertiser to use a format that would mislead consumers into believing an ad is actually an independent news program....This type of placement is very different from putting Coca-Cola into a Tom Cruise movie, where you can argue that it's artistic license. (Peebles, 2003, p. 40)

Mozelle appears to agree with Davidson's argument that many placements are benign, posing no threat of harm to the consumer; and therefore, although deceptive at some level, are legally permissible.

Examining product placement from a legal standpoint, one scholar argued that it is highly unlikely for product placements to ever be judged illegal by the Supreme Court since any government regulations restricting or requiring crediting of product placements in feature films would be considered unconstitutional (Siegel, 2004). Bills were introduced to the government in the early 1980s that would have required films to list companies who paid for placements in the opening credits and no federal legislation emerged. Additionally, the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission refused to participate in any regulation aimed at restricting product placements in movies (Siegel, 2004). Any regulation therefore, of product placements within the entertainment industry is going to have to come from within the industry and

be self-imposed. In the absence of public outcry regarding the practice of product placement, it is unlikely that self-regulation of product placements would ever involve mentioning them in the opening credits, as some have proposed (Siegel, 2004), or banning them altogether.

Television is a different story. Avery and Ferraro (2000) performed a content analysis on 112 hours of prime-time programming from four networks to document brand appearances and found that prominently displayed branded products were reinforced by character interaction and were inextricably intertwined with the plot development. In their conclusion, Avery and Ferraro (2000) state that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of 1970 grants consumers the right to know *who* is attempting to persuade them and argue that based on this, consumers also have the right to know *when* they are being appealed to on a commercial level. They suggested that the FCC consider regulating product placements in television shows, especially ones directed at children, whose sensitivity to advertising is not yet fully formed. In 2001, a year after their study, the FCC established regulations requiring television producers to disclose to consumers the names of companies who paid to have their products placed in television programs (Siegel, 2004).

Interestingly, studies of college students' attitudes towards product placements in movies reveal that subjects do not oppose the practice of product placement (Siegel, 2004), and some even prefer it to traditional forms of advertising because it, by and large, does not interrupt their entertainment content (Karrh, 1998). In fact, in a survey of 171 college students, Karrh found that fewer than one-third of subjects opposed product

placement or believed it should be banned (1998). Karrh left the door open for future research though in his comment that “while college students found a general acceptance of brand placement...it remains an open question whether the views of college-aged samples – likely a media-savvy group – are shared by other parts of the population” (Karrh, 1998, p. 38). An interesting study would seek to determine if sample populations comprised of other age groups consider product placement an ethical practice. The current study recognizes the lack of attention that has been paid to non-students by researchers in extant examinations of product placement and attempts to shed some light on whether or not other segments of the population consider product placement a morally acceptable practice.

Purpose Statement

The focus of this quantitatively-oriented and exploratory study was to examine the relationship between two variables: the attitudes of baby boomers towards product placements, and the frequency of baby boomers' media consumption. Baby boomers were defined as American adults born between 1946 and 1964 (El Nasser, 2004; Fry, 2004; Harmon, Webster, & Wyenberg, 1999), and product placements were defined as the paid inclusion of branded products into a variety of mass media formats. Media consumption was limited to the following formats: television, major motion pictures, music videos, video games and Internet web sites.

In addition, this study sought to determine whether a correlation between age and a subject's ethical acceptability (or moral approval) of product placements exists. Age was the independent variable, while the subjects' moral approval of product placements functioned as the dependent variable. The independent variable, age, was further segmented into five-year groupings as follows: 1964 – 1960, 1959 – 1955, 1954 – 1950, and 1949 – 1946. Using individuals as the unit of analysis, each segment was analyzed to determine if any significant difference exists among the segments. An enumeration, reflecting a baby boomer population, was drawn from an insurance company in Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to running frequencies, statistical tests of variance and correlation including the ANOVA and Pearson's Product Moment tests were used to analyze survey responses.

Based on the foregoing review of literature on product placement, several hypotheses were posed that probe an area of silence in the extant literature. The overwhelming majority of studies have examined college-aged subjects. In light of this, a number of researchers have recommended that the views of other age groups towards the ethical acceptability of product placement be examined (Avery & Ferraro, 2000; Karrh, 1998). In response to this call, the pursuant hypotheses explore the attitudes towards product placements in the mass media among a baby-boomer enumeration. In the hypotheses, “ethically acceptable” is defined as a subject’s moral approval of product placements and by extension, the absence of a belief that the practice is morally questionable.

Studies suggest that people who enjoy watching television and going to see movies in theaters will do so more frequently, and will also enjoy various elements of these media, including the practice of product placement (Gupta & Gould, 1997). Conversely, it is thought that people who have reservations about television and movies will consume them less and will also be less approving of product placements. Therefore it was hypothesized that:

H1: Subjects who more frequently consume media (i.e.: watch television, go to movies, watch music videos, play video games and visit Internet web sites) are more likely to find product placements ethically acceptable than subjects who consume media less frequently.

College-aged samples have been the most frequently surveyed population in the area of product placement research, largely because they have a perceived higher movie-going frequency than other age populations (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Gould, Gupta, & Grabner-Krauter, 2000; Karrh, Frith, & Callison, 2001). However, findings from these studies are inherently limited because college students are simply not typical of the general population (Babbie, 2004). Therefore, studying baby boomers is beneficial not only because their attitudes towards product placements have not yet been examined, but also because findings related to this age group are arguably more extendable to the general population.

At nearly 80 million strong, baby boomers make up one third of the population, control 20% of the nation's financial assets and hold 50% of all discretionary income (Fry, 2004). In addition, prevailing attitudes of this population suggest that they favor self-sufficiency, hard work and have an optimistic view of the future (Fry, 2004; Gusman, 2004).

Baby boomers are credited with setting social and marketing trends, and are described as "affluent, mobile, interested in consuming; they respond to changing trends and are advertising literate" (Haynes, 2004, p. 31). Baby boomers have been shown to be more concerned than younger age groups with financial planning, health and leisure activities (Harmon, Webster, & Weyenberg, 1999; Moschis, Lee, Mathur, & Strautman, 2000). In regards to media consumption and preferences, reports have shown that baby boomers are the first generation to be raised on television, and they continue to cite television as their primary source of entertainment (Paul, 2003).

As they age, baby boomers appear to embrace new forms of media. “Boomers have proven to be open and easily adaptable to new technologies and media, be it cable TV, digital TV or the Internet” (Paul, 2003, p. 24). In fact, AARP, formerly the American Association of Retired Persons, recently reported that 10% of their members contact the organization via the Internet, which is 50% higher than the level doing so in 2003 (Levey, 2004). AARP is currently pursuing direct response TV, search engine marketing and Web strategies to make sure they remain relevant to their growing membership (Levey, 2004).

This age group is important to advertisers for many reasons including, but not limited to, the amount of discretionary income they possess (Strum, 2002), as well as their favorable attitude towards spending and consumption (Haynes, 2004). As advertisers market more products towards baby boomers (Crain, 2004), it is of value to know what this critical segment of consumers thinks about product placements since they are an increasingly popular advertising practice.

Having grown up on television and being open-minded towards new forms of media, baby boomers are frequent consumers of mass media and it was expected that this enumeration of subjects would largely hold no moral objections to product placements. The following hypotheses intended to determine the attitudes of baby boomers towards the advertising practice of product placement.

H2: In congruence with an earlier study (Gupta & Gould, 1997) on a college-aged sample's ethical acceptability of product placements, subjects in the current study will have largely favorable attitudes towards product placements in television and films.

H3: There is no significant correlation between a subject's age and their attitude towards product placements. Therefore, no significant difference in attitudes towards product placements is expected to exist among age groupings.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Subjects

The researcher identified a specific population of baby boomers that were accessible for surveying at an insurance company in a major Midwestern city. Since human subjects were involved in the research, an application for approval as an exempt research project was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The research project was approved (See Appendix A). In addition, the researcher obtained certification from the IRB to conduct research with human subjects through an online training course in February of 2004.

In addition, approval was sought and gained from the Head of the Human Resources and General Office departments, to perform a survey on all adults aged born between 1946 – 1964 working at the company's headquarters, which are located in Omaha, Nebraska (see Appendix B). The total number of employees working at the company's headquarters was 589. A listing of all employees in the age range specified above revealed the enumeration to be 305, or 52% of the total population.

According to Census 2000 data, there are 73,582,052 Americans aged 40 – 59 throughout the nation, with 118,569 of those living in Douglas County. Omaha, which is located in Douglas County, Nebraska, is an ideal setting from which to draw an enumeration for the current study because of its representativeness to national population trends. Data gained from the company's Equal Opportunity Office was compared with

data from the 2000 Census for potential resemblance to local and national population trends. An examination of the enumeration that was drawn for this study revealed that it is fairly representative of the Douglas County and National averages. In fact, only one age group in the sample (40 – 44) varies by more than 10% from the Douglas County and National population compositions (see Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison by Age Groups			
Age Groups	Subjects %	Douglas County %	National %
40-44	42.0%*	31.0%	30.0%
45-49	28.0%	29.0%	28.0%
50-54	21.0%	24.0%	24.0%
55-58**	9.0%	16.0%	18.0%

* All figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percent.

** Note that while the Census 2000 lists its last age group in the considered sequence as 55 – 59, this variation is slight enough that the data can still be considered valid for comparison here.

To further determine the representativeness of the enumeration, a comparison of age groups was performed using Census 2000 data on gender (Table 2) and ethnicity (Tables 3, 4 & 5). The results show that while the Douglas County and National populations mirror each other, the enumeration is skewed towards females by nearly 20%, with the majority of the overrepresentation present in the 40 – 44 age group.

Table 2: Comparison by Gender and Age Groups						
Age Groups	Subjects %		Douglas County %		National %	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
40-44	31.0%	12.0%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%
45-49	19.0%	8.0%	16.0%	12.0%	16.0%	12.0%
50-54	15.0%	6.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%
55-58**	6.0%	3.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%

** Note that while the Census 2000 lists its last age group in the considered sequence as 55 – 59, this variation is slight enough that the data can still be considered valid for comparison here.

An examination of ethnicity reveals that while Douglas County is nearly identical to National percentages of African American and Native American/American Indian baby boomers, it has only a quarter of the National percentages of Asian individuals in every age group and just under half of the National percentages of Hispanic people living within its boundaries. Additionally, whites (of non-Hispanic origin) are overrepresented by 10% in every baby boomer age group. The enumeration possesses an even greater overrepresentation of whites than Douglas County. At nearly 20% over the National percentages for whites (of non-Hispanic origin) in every age group, and an underrepresentation in every other ethnic category, subjects cannot be said to represent National or even local population percentages for baby boomers in regards to ethnic composition. A visual presentation of this information is contained in tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3: Ethnic Distributions of Sample					
Age Groups	Subjects %				
	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White
40-44	2.0%*	0.0%	2.0%	3.0%	93.0%
45-49	9.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	91.0%
50-54	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	94.0%
55-58**	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	96.0%

* All figures in Tables 4, 5 and 6 have been rounded to the nearest whole percent.

** Note that for Tables 4, 5 and 6, that while the Census 2000 lists its last age group in the considered sequence as 55 – 59, this variation is slight enough that the data can still be considered valid for comparison here.

Table 4: Ethnic Distribution of Douglas County Baby Boomers					
Age Groups	Douglas County %				
	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White
40-44	11.0%	0.06%	1.0%	5.0%	82.0%
45-49	10.0%	0.05%	1.0%	4.0%	84.0%
50-54	10.0%	0.05%	1.0%	3.0%	85.0%
55-58	9.0%	0.05%	1.0%	3.0%	86.0%

Table 5: Ethnic Distribution of American Baby Boomers					
Age Groups	National %				
	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White
40-44	12.0%	0.08%	4.0%	10.0%	72.0%
45-49	12.0%	0.08%	4.0%	9.0%	74.0%
50-54	10.0%	0.07%	4.0%	7.0%	76.0%
55-58	10.0%	0.06%	3.0%	7.0%	78.0%

In summary, although the enumeration does not represent the National composition of baby boomers ethnically, and is slightly skewed in the area of gender, this study did not consider ethnicity or gender as independent variables and so it was not adversely affected by the enumeration's lack of ethnic or gender representation. In fact, age was the only independent variable considered, and in this regard, the enumeration does represent Local and National percentages. With the exception of the 40 – 44 age group, findings regarding the relationship between age and attitudes towards product placement are extendable to the larger population.

Study Procedure

The list of subject names obtained by the researcher was used to generate labels that contained each subject's name and the floor they worked on. Each label was affixed to an inner-office mail jacket. The use of a mail jacket helped ensure that the survey was examined only by the subjects and the researcher, and not other employees outside of the enumeration. The instrument was a paper and pen survey, and was printed on University of Nebraska at Omaha letterhead. Each survey was distributed through the inner-office mail system so that the researcher had no direct contact with the subjects while they filled out their responses.

A survey, cover letter and return envelope was placed inside each mail jacket. The return envelope had a label with the researcher's name and floor worked on affixed to the front. The use of a return envelope helped ensure that the subjects' responses were kept private from other employees, and that they were seen only by the researcher.

Individual mail jackets were grouped into like floor numbers. The researcher delivered each group of mail jackets to the appropriate floor and asked the secretary or receptionist of that floor to place each mail jacket in the appropriate subject's in-box. This procedure helped ensure that each subject received a survey, and prevented surveys from being delivered to employees outside of the enumeration. This procedure also prevented the possibility of the researcher inserting bias into subjects' responses, since the researcher had no direct interaction with the subjects when they completed the survey.

The cover letter (see Appendix C) introduced the researcher to the subject and explained the purpose of the research as providing the data for the researcher's Master's

thesis. In addition, it informed the subject that his/her participation in the survey was voluntary and that all responses would be kept anonymous. The cover letter asked the subject to complete and return the survey within two business weeks of the distribution date.

As completed surveys were received by the researcher, they were assigned a number ranging from 001 to 305. Completed surveys were numbered in the order that they were received, so that the first survey received was opened and numbered “001,” the second survey was opened and numbered “002,” etc. A total of 264 completed surveys were returned, garnering an 87% response rate. In analysis of the data, subjects are identified by an ID number ranging from 1 to 264. The absence of names on the survey itself, coupled with the use of an ordered numbering system ensured that all responses were kept anonymous, even to the researcher.

Surveys were distributed on Monday, June 7, 2004. Subjects were asked to complete the survey and return it to the researcher by the close of business on Friday, June 18, 2004. In order to encourage completion of the surveys, a prenotification announcement ran Friday, June 4, 2004, on the Company’s daily newsletter, *Woodmen Today*, as a news item (see Appendix D). An additional prenotification announcement was posted the morning of June 7 (see Appendix D). Reminder notices were also posted on *Woodmen Today* on Thursday, June 10 and Thursday, June 17 (see Appendix D). This was an excellent place to run the prenotification and reminder announcements since 86% of employees view the newsletter as a top source of information and read it daily (C. M. Wright, personal communication, April, 2004).

Research Design

Since survey research is considered an excellent vehicle for “measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population” (Babbie, 2004, p. 243), the mixed-method study used a survey with both closed and open-ended responses as a means for collecting data to test hypotheses. The survey used draws on an instrument developed by Gupta and Gould (1997) in their study on the ethical acceptability of product placements among a sample of college students. The instrument was composed of 23 questions, 17 of which are constructed as a matrix of items employing a Likert scale response format (see Appendix E). This format was chosen because it uses space efficiently and enables a faster completion rate for respondents (Babbie, 2004). Since only five to ten minutes of employee time was approved for completion of the survey by the company, concern was given to making the instrument clear and concise.

The instrument was presented in a booklet format with information printed on three of the available four pages, and began with a description of product placement. A description of the practice was included so that respondents who are unaware of the term may provide intelligent responses to the survey items. Whereas Gupta and Gould (1997) included two pictures of sample placements along with a similar description of the practice of product placement at the beginning of their instrument, pictures were left out of this instrument in order to avoid the possibility of priming the respondents towards the brands shown. The absence of photographic stills of actual placements prevents limiting or framing of respondents’ memories as they consider the survey items. Immediately

following the description of product placement were instructions for completing the survey. The instructions directed respondents to circle the number on a scale of 1 – 5 that best represents their response. The scale “Strongly Agree; Agree; Neutral; Disagree; and Strongly Disagree” was printed above the lists of corresponding numbers on each page.

Items 1 – 2, 6 – 7 and 17 were replicated directly from the instrument created by Gupta and Gould (1997). Gupta and Gould’s (1997) original study found that subjects who opposed product placement did so on ethical grounds and in particular, thought the placement of alcohol or tobacco brands in movies was unethical. Therefore, it was of value to know if a baby-boomer aged enumeration would respond the same way towards the placement of alcohol and tobacco brands in movies, as did the college sample that Gupta and Gould employed. Item 9 was altered slightly from Gupta and Gould’s original statement where their word “movie” was replaced with “television show.” This change is one example of an effort made in the current study to assess subjects’ attitudes towards product placements in a variety of media formats.

The remaining items were developed by the researcher and are conceptually based on items used in previous studies (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Karrh, Frith, & Callison, 2001; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003; Morton & Friedman, 2002). However, none of the previous studies undertaken asked respondents to identify their opinions about product placements in media other than movies or television shows. For this reason, items 11 – 16 addressed subjects’ consumption frequency of, and attitudes towards product placements in video games, music videos and web sites on the Internet.

Items 3 and 4 were included to ascertain subjects' level of concern towards product placement in general. In discovering whether or not subjects found the practice of product placement morally acceptable, it was important to discern if they even cared about product placements in the first place. These items both helped answer that question and provided additional incentive for completing the survey by giving subjects a reason to respond. Items 8 – 10 were used to measure respondents' usage of and attitudes towards product placements in television. Since baby boomers are the first generation to be raised on television and their consumption of television tends to be higher than other media (Paul, 2003), it is important to single out their responses towards television in particular.

Item 23 was an open-ended question that allowed subjects to comment on any aspect of product placement not covered in the survey. An open-ended question was included to add variety and depth to the research design. Items 18 – 22 were demographic questions asking subjects to identify their age, gender, highest level of education completed, ethnicity and whether or not they have children or grandchildren under the age of 18. While only item 18 was factored into analysis for this study, the other demographic information will be useful for analysis in future studies further examining the relationship of baby boomers to product placements. Demographic questions were presented second to last to reduce the possibility of subjects discarding the survey (Babbie, 2004).

The items were ordered by media type. Film questions were presented first, with television following second, music videos third, video games fourth and web site

questions last. This order was chosen to avoid researcher bias and to create a logical flow of thought for respondents. The questions were constructed with specific attention to language used. While bias was not found in the wording used by Gupta and Gould (1997) in their instrument, they did employ a number of negative items. For this reason, the majority of their items are not included in the current instrument. Negatively-worded items were excluded from the present instrument in order to avoid confusing the subject or gaining inaccurate data (Babbie, 2004).

Statistical Methods

Data from returned surveys was entered into SPSS and the frequencies were run to determine the mean for each item. This information provided data to draw conclusions about the overall ethical acceptability of the enumeration towards product placements as well as the overall consumption patterns of respondents. Statistical significance was set at the .05 level. In order to test hypotheses 1 – 3, tests of correlation, chi-square analysis and paired-sample t-tests were performed. These tests determined whether or not significant Pearson's product-moment correlation values existed between the subjects' frequency of media consumption and their attitudes towards product placements in movies, television shows, video games, music videos and web sites.

Frequency of consumption of movies, television, music videos, video games and web sites were given in responses to items 7, 8, 12, 14 and 16, respectively. Attitudes towards product placements in movies, television, music videos, video games and web sites were given in responses to items 1 – 2 and 5 – 6, 9 – 10, 11, 13 and 15, respectively.

Attitudes towards product placement in general were given in responses to items 3 – 4 and 17. Although the scale was ordinal, Spearman's rho and Kendall's tau tests were not applicable due to the fact that 264 completed surveys were received.

Since responses were nominal and ordinal, and involved one population, chi-square and tests of correlation were used to test hypothesis 1. Simple comparison of means was used to test hypothesis 2. To test hypothesis 3, responses to item 18, in which subjects indicated the year they were born, were recoded into five, four-year age groupings and a single-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to see if any significant difference in attitude towards product placements existed among age groups.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Summary

Surveys were returned by 264 of 305 possible subjects for a response rate of 87%. Overall, most respondents identified themselves as frequent consumers of mass media entertainment and a majority had no moral objections to product placements in the media formats examined. One notable exception was the inclusion of tobacco and alcohol products in PG-13 movies, where 66% respondents said they disapproved of that practice. Nearly 60% of respondents said they prefer to see real brands in movies, the same percentage said the inclusion of brand name products in television shows makes them more realistic, and 40% of subjects approved of the use of product placements in music videos and video games. More than 50% approved of the addition of product placements to Internet web sites. One area where subjects voiced their disapproval was over advertisers writing scripts for television shows. Only 12% found this practice acceptable. No significant difference in attitude was found to exist among the five age groupings which the enumeration was divided into. Findings revealed an overall attitude of indifference towards product placements among the individuals surveyed.

Hypothesis 1 (H1)

To determine the outcome for H1, chi-square analysis was the main test used. To further determine the relationship between media consumption and attitudes toward product placements, means for various items were compared using paired sample t-tests.

A one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run on means for items 1 – 17. All items had normal distribution, which made the paired t-test useable for the determination of the existence of significant differences between means. In addition, Pearson's product-moment tests of correlation were run on all compared items to see if means varied significantly together, or separately, and in what direction. Results were separated by media format (i.e. movies, television, music videos, video games and Internet web sites) and responses examined accordingly. Findings were broken down by the above listed media formats and analyzed for significance.

Movies: It was hypothesized that subjects who more frequently consumed movies would also be more approving of product placements in movies. Items 1 – 2 and 5 – 7 asked respondents specifically about their attitudes towards product placements in movies and asked them how often they consumed movies in theaters. A simple test of frequencies revealed that subjects were evenly divided in their responses to item 7, “I frequently watch movies in theaters,” (see table 6 below).

I frequently watch movies in theaters.

Table 6		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	22	8.3	8.3	8.3
	agree	83	31.4	31.4	39.8
	neutral	46	17.4	17.4	57.2
	disagree	87	33.0	33.0	90.2
	strongly disagree	26	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

Nearly 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they frequently watch movies in theaters. However, 17% were neutral and 43% said they did not frequently watch movies in theaters. Because subjects were so evenly divided, it made the connections that were established between attitudes towards product placements in movies and frequency of movie consumption less potent, and in some cases, insignificant.

Chi-square analysis revealed significant relationships between paired items 1 & 7 ($d.f. = 16, x^2 = 35.75, p < .003$, 2-sided), 2 & 7 ($d.f. = 16, x^2 = 29.84, p < .019$, 2-sided), 5 & 7 ($d.f. = 16, x^2 = 27.59, p < .035$, 2-sided), and 6 & 7 ($d.f. = 16, x^2 = 32.66, p < .008$, 2-sided). Complete tables for the above mentioned chi-square values, as well as correlation values, are located in Appendix F under “movies.” In addition, paired-sample t-tests were run on each of the above listed pairs of items and each was found to have a significant difference between means (full tables are located in Appendix F):

- items 1 & 7 ($M1 = 2.36, M7 = 3.05, p < .000$, 2-tailed)
- items 2 & 7 ($M2 = 2.11, M7 = 3.05, p < .000$, 2-tailed)
- items 5 & 7 ($M5 = 3.93, M7 = 3.05, p < .000$, 2-tailed)
- items 6 & 7 ($M6 = 3.75, M7 = 3.05, p < .000$, 2-tailed)

When Pearson’s product-moment test of correlation was run on all these paired items, only pairings 1 & 7 ($R = .243, p < .000$) and 6 & 7 ($R = -.171, p < .005$) achieved significant correlation levels. A significant correlation in the positive direction for items 1 & 7 and a slight correlation in the negative direction for items 6 & 7 further confirmed that subjects who more frequently watch movies believe product placements make movies more realistic and do not believe the practice should be banned from movies.

When all this information is examined together, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between subjects' attitudes towards product placement in movies and their frequency of movie consumption. However, it is not the relationship proposed in hypothesis 1.

Overall, a majority of subjects agreed that they prefer to see real brands over fake brands in movies (see table 7 below); agreed that tobacco and alcohol products should be banned from PG and PG-13 rated movies (see table 8 next page); disagreed with the statement, "I will not go to a movie beforehand if I know that brands have been placed prominently in that movie for commercial purposes (see table 9 next page); and disagreed that the placement of brands in movies should be completely banned (see table 10 next page).

I prefer to see real brands in movies rather than fake/fictitious brands.

Table 7		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	48	18.2	18.2	18.2
	Agree	101	38.3	38.3	56.4
	Neutral	93	35.2	35.2	91.7
	Disagree	17	6.4	6.4	98.1
	Strongly disagree	5	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

Use of brand-name tobacco and alcohol products should be banned from PG and PG-13 rated movies.

Table 8		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	108	40.9	40.9	40.9
	agree	67	25.4	25.4	66.3
	neutral	50	18.9	18.9	85.2
	disagree	30	11.4	11.4	96.6
	strongly disagree	9	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

I will not go to a movie beforehand if I know that brands have been placed prominently in that movie for commercial purposes.

Table 9		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	2	.8	.8	.8
	agree	7	2.7	2.7	3.4
	neutral	62	23.5	23.5	26.9
	disagree	129	48.9	48.9	75.8
	strongly disagree	64	24.2	24.2	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

The placement of brands in movies should be completely banned.

Table 10		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	4	1.5	1.5	1.5
	agree	12	4.5	4.6	6.1
	neutral	73	27.7	27.8	33.8
	disagree	130	49.2	49.4	83.3
	strongly disagree	44	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	263	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		264	100.0		

With the exception of believing that the use of brand-name tobacco and alcohol products should be banned from PG and PG-13 rated movies, subjects approved of the use of product placements in movies. However, since responses to item 7, regarding frequency of movie-watching in theaters, were so evenly divided, it cannot be said that subjects who more frequently consume movies are more likely to find product placements ethically acceptable than those subjects who consume movies less frequently. In this regard, the null hypothesis must be accepted that movie-viewing frequency does not affect ethical acceptability of product placements among baby boomers. Subjects who frequently consume movies are just as likely as those who do not to approve of the placement of branded products in the movies they view.

Television: It was hypothesized that subjects who more frequently consumed television would also be more approving of product placements in television. Items 8 – 10 asked respondents specifically about their attitudes towards product placements in television and asked them how often they watched television. A test of frequencies revealed that a majority of subjects (73%) watch television frequently (see table 11 next page):

I frequently watch television.

Table 11		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	65	24.6	24.7	24.7
	agree	127	48.1	48.3	73.0
	neutral	28	10.6	10.6	83.7
	disagree	40	15.2	15.2	98.9
	strongly disagree	3	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	263	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		264	100.0		

Because a clear majority was established in responses to this question, it made comparisons between television consumption and attitudes towards product placements in television more meaningful.

Chi-square analysis revealed no significant relationships between paired items 8 & 9 ($d.f. = 16$, $\chi^2 = 25.49$, $p < .06$, 2-sided), and 8 & 10 ($d.f. = 16$, $\chi^2 = 5.84$, $p < .99$, 2-sided). Complete tables for the above mentioned chi-square and correlation values are listed in Appendix F under “television.” Paired-sample t-tests were also run on paired items 8 & 9 and 8 & 10 and each was found to have a significant difference between means (full tables are located in appendix F under “television”):

- items 8 & 9 ($M_8 = 2.20$, $M_9 = 2.45$, $p < .002$, 2-tailed)
- items 8 & 10 ($M_8 = 2.20$, $M_{10} = 3.49$, $p < .000$, 2-tailed)

Pearson’s product-moment test of correlation was run on these paired items and a slight, significant correlation in the positive direction was found between paired items 8 & 9

($R = .138, p < .026$). Items 8 & 10 did not achieve a significant correlation value ($R = .059, p < .338$).

Based on the data presented above, it was concluded that no significant relationship existed between respondents' frequency of television consumption and their attitudes towards product placements in television programs. As a result, the research hypothesis was rejected in favor of the null hypothesis. Means and frequencies for items 9 and 10 (see tables 12 below, and 13 next page) showed that the majority of subjects agreed that the presence of product placements in television programs makes them more realistic, while a slight majority of respondents believed it was not okay for advertisers to help write scripts for television shows.

The presence of brand name products in a television show makes it more realistic.

Table 12		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	37	14.0	14.0	14.0
	agree	122	46.2	46.2	60.2
	neutral	60	22.7	22.7	83.0
	disagree	40	15.2	15.2	98.1
	strongly disagree	5	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

It is okay for advertisers to write scripts for television shows.

Table 13		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	6	2.3	2.3	2.3
	agree	25	9.5	9.5	11.7
	neutral	101	38.3	38.3	50.0
	disagree	97	36.7	36.7	86.7
	strongly disagree	35	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

Overall then, subjects approved of the use of product placements for adding realism to television shows, but believed that advertisers should not be writing scripts for television programs. The finding that this advanced form of product placement was not acceptable to a slight majority of respondents further reinforced the null hypothesis.

Music Videos: It was hypothesized that respondents who more frequently consumed music videos would also be more approving of musicians receiving payment to wear or use branded products in their videos. Items 11 – 12 asked subjects specifically about their attitudes towards product placements in music videos and asked them how often they watch music videos on television. A test of frequencies revealed that a majority of subjects (nearly 70%) do not frequently watch music videos on television (see table 14 next page).

I frequently watch music videos on television.

Table 14		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	7	2.7	2.7	2.7
	agree	35	13.3	13.3	15.9
	neutral	41	15.5	15.5	31.4
	disagree	104	39.4	39.4	70.8
	strongly disagree	77	29.2	29.2	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

Interestingly, although there was a clear majority of subjects who do not frequently watch music videos, the majority of subjects either agreed or were neutral in response to the item 11 “it is okay for musicians to be paid to wear or to use brand-name products in their music videos.”

Chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between items 11 & 12 ($d.f. = 16, \chi^2 = 35.62, p < .003$, 2-sided). Complete tables for the above mentioned chi-square and correlation value can be found in Appendix F under “music videos.” In addition, a paired-samples t-test showed a significant difference between the means for items 11 & 12:

- items 11 & 12 ($M_{11} = 2.71, M_{12} = 3.79, p < .000$, 2-tailed)

Pearson’s product moment test revealed a low, but definite correlation in the positive direction between the two items ($R = .247, p < .000$). Overall, a slight majority of subjects approved of the use of product placements in music videos and a substantial number were neutral in their responses (see table 15 next page).

It is okay for musicians to be paid to wear or use brand-name products in their music videos.

Table 15		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	12	4.5	4.5	4.5
	agree	106	40.2	40.2	44.7
	neutral	102	38.6	38.6	83.3
	disagree	35	13.3	13.3	96.6
	strongly disagree	9	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

Considered together, these statistical tests called for the rejection of the research hypothesis. Once again, the null hypothesis was accepted, as it was found that subjects who less frequently watched music videos approved of the use of product placements in them. This is mirrored in the correlation test as means for items 11 & 12 varied together in a positive direction; if the research hypothesis were true, they would have varied inversely.

Video Games: It was hypothesized that subjects who more frequently played video games on the computer or on gaming systems would be more approving of advertisers paying to have their brands integrated into video games. Interestingly, as in the other examined media formats, this was not the case. A simple test of frequencies revealed that most subjects (84%) did not frequently play video games (see table 16 next page).

I frequently play video games on the computer or on gaming systems such as PlayStation®, Xbox® or GameCube®.

Table 16		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	5	1.9	1.9	1.9
	agree	17	6.4	6.4	8.3
	neutral	20	7.6	7.6	15.9
	disagree	72	27.3	27.3	43.2
	strongly disagree	150	56.8	56.8	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

More subjects agreed that it was okay for advertisers to include their products in video games (38%) than those who did not approve of the practice (22%). However, 40% were neutral (see table 17 below). Because a clear majority was not established, and so many subjects responded neutrally to item 13, a significant relationship between the two items could not be established.

It is okay for advertisers to pay to have brand-name products included in video games.

Table 17		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	8	3.0	3.0	3.0
	agree	92	34.8	34.8	37.9
	neutral	105	39.8	39.8	77.7
	disagree	43	16.3	16.3	93.9
	strongly disagree	16	6.1	6.1	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

Chi-square analysis showed that no significant relationship existed between how frequently subjects played video games and their approval of product placements in those games ($d.f. = 16, \chi^2 = 18.99, p < .887$, 2-sided). Complete chi-square and correlation tables for items 13 & 14 are located in Appendix F under “video games.” A paired-samples t-test on items 13 & 14 revealed that a significant difference did exist between the two means:

- items 13 & 14 ($M_{13} = 2.88, M_{14} = 4.31, p < .000$, 2-tailed)

Pearson’s product-moment test of correlation was run and showed no significant relationship between the two items ($R = .009, p < .887$). The results of all of the above mentioned statistical tests were examined together, and the research hypothesis was rejected in favor of the null hypothesis. Since a significant relationship between the two items could not be established, and a simple comparison of means revealed that subjects approved of product placements in video games even though they did not frequently play them, the research hypothesis was rejected.

Internet Web sites: It was hypothesized that subjects who more frequently use the Internet to access web sites for informational or entertainment purposes would also be more approving of the use of product placements in web sites. A test of frequencies revealed that subjects’ internet usage was high, with nearly 70% agreeing that they frequently use the internet to access web sites for entertainment and/or information purposes (see table 18 next page).

I frequently use the Internet to access web sites for entertainment and/or information purposes.

Table 18		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	53	20.1	20.1	20.1
	agree	130	49.2	49.2	69.3
	neutral	25	9.5	9.5	78.8
	disagree	38	14.4	14.4	93.2
	strongly disagree	18	6.8	6.8	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

Chi-square analysis of items 15 and 16 showed that a significant relationship existed between subjects' frequency of internet usage and approval of product placements in web sites on the internet ($d.f. = 16, \chi^2 = 49.51, p < .000$). Complete chi-square table for these items is located in Appendix F under "Internet." In addition, a paired-sample t-test was run on items 15 and 16 and revealed a significant difference between the two means:

- items 15 & 16 ($M_{15} = 2.64, M_{16} = 2.39, p < .000, 2\text{-tailed}$)

The frequencies for item 15 further revealed that a majority of respondents agreed with the statement, "It is okay for advertisers to pay to have their brands included on various web sites on the Internet" (see table 19 next page).

It is okay for advertisers to pay to have their brands included on various web sites on the Internet.

Table 19		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	15	5.7	5.7	5.7
	agree	121	45.8	45.8	51.5
	neutral	86	32.6	32.6	84.1
	disagree	29	11.0	11.0	95.1
	strongly disagree	13	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	264	100.0	100.0	

With just over 50% approving of product placements in Internet web sites, it was not surprising to find a low, but definite, correlation in the positive direction between the two items ($R = .219, p < .000$). The research hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that subjects who more frequently use the Internet are also more likely to approve of product placements in Internet web sites.

In summary, for the various media formats considered in hypothesis 1, the research hypothesis only proved true for Internet web sites. In all other formats of media considered (i.e. movies, television, music videos and video games), subjects' attitudes towards product placement and frequency of media consumption did not vary together. Interestingly, subjects approved of product placements in all media formats considered with the exception of advertisers writing scripts for television shows. This extreme form of product placement was not approved for the television medium.

Hypothesis 2 (H2)

A simple test of frequencies revealed the answer to the second hypothesis which stated that *subjects...will have largely favorable attitudes towards product placements in television and films*. As was discussed in the analysis of hypothesis 1, subjects' attitudes towards product placements in movies was determined by responses to items 1 – 2 and 5 – 6, while attitudes towards placements in television was determined by responses to items 9 – 10.

A majority of subjects agreed that product placements make movies and television shows more realistic (56% and 60%, respectively). The inclusion of product placements did not affect consumption frequencies in movies, as 75% of respondents disagreed with the statement, "I will not go see a movie beforehand if I know that brands have been placed prominently in that movie ...," and 66% disagreed that the placement of brands in movies should be completely banned. In fact, there was only one clear case in which subjects did not approve of product placements:

- 66% agreed that tobacco and alcohol products should be banned from PG and PG-13 rated movies

Regarding product placements in television shows, responses to item 10 were split between neutrality and disagreement:

- 50% said that it was not okay for advertisers to write scripts for television shows;
38% were neutral

In summary, the research hypothesis for H2 was accepted as subjects held no general objections to product placements in television or movies. Although more subjects disagreed with the emerging practice of advertisers helping to write scripts for television shows than those who supported it, the large number of neutral responses to item 10 showed that subjects have not developed solid positions towards this new form of product placement. There was one exception to this rule of general acceptance. In fact, it was the same outcome discovered by Gupta and Gould in their 1997 study. Among a sample of college students, Gupta and Gould found that subjects who more frequently viewed movies in theaters found product placement more acceptable except in the case of cigarettes and alcohol, which were not considered okay for placement in PG or PG-13 rated movies. The findings of this study compliment their conclusion regarding this matter.

Hypothesis 3 (H3)

To determine the outcome of H3, responses to item 18, which asked subjects what year they were born, were recoded into four age categories and given new labels as follows:

- 1946 – 1949 = “oldest”
- 1950 – 1954 = “old”
- 1955 – 1959 = “young”
- 1960 – 1964 = “youngest”

Means for responses to items 3, 4 and 17 were then compared according to these recoded

variables to see if any significant difference existed between them (see table 20 below for presentation of means). Items 3, 4 and 17 were chosen because they measure attitudes towards product placement in general, while all other items (with the exception of items 18 – 22 which were demographic questions, and item 23, which allowed for open-ended feedback) measured attitudes towards product placement in regards to a specific media format.

Table 20 - Means by Age Category for General Attitudes Toward Product Placements

Age Categories		I care about product placements.	It is important to me to know how advertisers may be influencing entertainment content	I would consider product placements as "commercials in disguise."
Oldest (1946 – 1949)	Mean	2.88	2.12	2.50
	N	26	26	26
	Std. Deviation	.909	.653	.812
Old (1950 – 1954)	Mean	2.69	2.48	2.07
	N	55	56	56
	Std. Deviation	.979	.991	.988
Young (1955 – 1959)	Mean	2.81	2.35	2.27
	N	78	77	77
	Std. Deviation	.666	.684	.868
Youngest (1960 – 1964)	Mean	2.88	2.52	2.25
	N	91	92	93
	Std. Deviation	.743	.883	1.007
Total	Mean	2.82	2.42	2.24
	N	250	251	252
	Std. Deviation	.795	.837	.945

A single-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) test revealed no significant difference between means for each age group (see table 21 below). With significance set at $p < .05$, there was no significant value of F for any age group. A complete table showing descriptives for the ANOVA testing H3 is located in appendix F under “H3 – ANOVA.”

Table 21		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I care about product placements.	Between Groups	1.351	3	.450	.709	.547
	Within Groups	156.185	246	.635		
	Total	157.536	249			
It is important to me to know how advertisers may be influencing entertainment content.	Between Groups	3.951	3	1.317	1.901	.130
	Within Groups	171.125	247	.693		
	Total	175.076	250			
I would consider product placements as "commercials in disguise."	Between Groups	3.435	3	1.145	1.286	.280
	Within Groups	220.799	248	.890		
	Total	224.234	251			

The Brown-Forsythe and Welch statistical tests were run to confirm the general F finding and further revealed no significant difference between the means of the four age groups with $p < .05$ (see table 22 next page).

Table 22		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
	Welch	.551	3	87.708	.648
	Brown-Forsythe	.630	3	131.880	.597
	Welch	2.424	3	95.864	.070
	Brown-Forsythe	2.013	3	188.145	.114
	Welch	1.425	3	95.732	.240
	Brown-Forsythe	1.366	3	194.231	.254

With no significant difference found between the age groups, post-hoc tests were unnecessary, and the research hypothesis was accepted for H3. It was therefore determined that no significant correlation existed between a subject's age (within the baby boomer population) and their attitude towards product placements. Now that analysis of the research hypotheses is complete, we turn to a discussion of the open-ended feedback received in the study.

Open-Ended Comments

Responses to item 23 on the survey provided subjects with an opportunity to voice any other comments they had about product placements. With 66 responses, twenty-five percent of all subjects answered the open-ended question. The majority of responses (28 or 42%) could be classified as positive towards product placements. Only 16 (or 24%) were negative and 75% of negative statements were against product placement in media directed at youth or against the placement of alcohol or tobacco

products in media. Twenty-two statements (or 33%) given were neutral towards product placement. In this way, open-ended feedback followed the general trend of closed-ended feedback in evaluating subjects' attitudes towards product placement.

Positive statements were evenly divided between young (those b. 1955-1964) and old (those b. 1946-1954) respondents. Positive statements fell into two broad categories: those supporting product placement as a function of capitalist society, and those supporting product placement because it injects an element of reality into creative entertainment. Examples of pro-capitalist statements were:

It's capitalism – go for it.

and,

Regulation/bans of product placement are completely unnecessary in a free market economy.

Examples of pro-realism statements were:

We live in a brand name world and to hide it now would be unrealistic. Advertisers should pay for the exposure and if the product is accepted, why not?

and,

I personally like things to be realistic, so I believe that real products and situations help drama.

and,

Product placement is a way to make products more interesting and possibly increase sales of the product. As long as it is being directed to the proper audience, I see no harm in it.

This last statement reflects a trend among respondents against product placements. When respondents disapproved of product placements, it was generally against the placement of tobacco or alcohol products in entertainment media aimed at young people or children. The following statements illustrate this trend:

Unhealthy products such as tobacco and alcohol should be banned from games and movies that may influence youth.

and,

I have no problem with pop, cars, laundry detergent, etc. being seen in programs. I don't think smoking, drinking or drugs should be promoted in any way.

and,

I feel very strongly about banning tobacco and alcohol products being advertised or anything related which can be harmful, especially when children can view it.

One of the recent trends in the evolution of product placements is the level of integration placements are achieving in entertainment media. As was discussed at length in the literature review, advertisers are now paying to write scripts for television shows, which gives them more control over how their product is used by the characters, as well as how their product is seen by the audience. A handful of respondents indicated through open-ended feedback that they were against this kind of product placement:

**As long as ‘placers’ don’t have production
or script control, it’s okay with me.**

and,

**Product advertisers should not have any control
over placement. That is covert manipulation.**

and,

**Overt promotion of a product paid for by
advertisers outside of an ad format is not good.**

What these respondents may not know is that advertisers are doing the very thing that they disapprove of. As advertisers continue to push the envelope of what is currently acceptable by attempting to further integrate products into entertainment media, the question becomes how much will consumers endure?

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Summary

Disproving Hypothesis 1, findings from this study showed that in general, the attitudes of baby boomers towards product placements and the frequency of their media consumption did not vary together. In every media format examined, subjects approved of traditional product placements, even when they did not frequently consume that media. In fact, the Internet was the only media format where hypothesis 1 proved true. Consumption frequency was so evenly divided for movies that a relationship between attitude towards product placements and consumption frequency could not be established. With television, although most subjects frequently consumed that medium, they approved of the use of product placements for realism but did not approve of an emerging form of non-traditional product placements where advertisers help write scripts for television shows.

Although music videos and video games were not frequently consumed by subjects, they approved of the placement of branded products in those formats. In this way, it could not be said that subjects who more frequently consume a certain media format, are more likely to approve of product placements in that format. Rather, it seemed that regardless of consumption, subjects were generally in favor of product placements and held no objections to them as long as the products were not cigarettes or alcohol, and so long as they were not placed in media for children. A simple comparison of means test for all age groups' responses to items 3, 4, and 17 (which were chosen for

their ability to measure attitude toward product placements in general) revealed that all means averaged below a 3.0. Since a Likert scale was employed, this average translates to agreement or approval of product placements in the entertainment media.

Hypothesis 2 further bore this reality out, as subjects held no objections to traditional product placements in television or movies. Subjects were overwhelmingly supportive of the use of product placements to add realism to television shows and movies. There were however, two exceptions to this general finding of acceptance. First, a slight majority of subjects did not approve of advertisers writing scripts for television shows. However, this is a non-traditional form of product placement and is so new that subjects may not even regard it as a form a product placement. Second, respondents disapproved of the placement of branded cigarettes and alcohol into PG or PG-13 rated movies. This finding supports an earlier discovery by Gupta and Gould in their 1997 study that determined the same result. Finally, a test of hypothesis 3 revealed that even when considering age as an independent variable, attitude towards product placements did not change, as there was no significant difference found between age groups in their response to items 3, 4 and 17.

The significance of these findings can be related in one word: indifference. Only 30% of subjects agreed with the statement, "I care about product placements." In addition, only 57% indicated that it is important to them to know how advertisers may be influencing entertainment content. Overall, subjects just don't care whether or not product placements are included in the entertainment media they enjoy. On their list of priority issues, product placement does not rank high. Interestingly, while most don't

care, some actually *prefer* product placements over traditional advertising. One subject's open-ended feedback says it best: "I consider product placements a preferable way to receive advertising." Liking its ability to mimic reality, some subjects prefer to receive their advertising as a seamless element, woven into their chosen entertainment, rather than an interruption from it.

This finding echoes previous studies, strengthening other research findings which suggest that college students prefer product placements over traditional advertising because it doesn't interrupt entertainment content (Karrh, 1998; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993). Today, consumers are willing to give up personal information in exchange for a free game that they can download off the Internet, even when that game is in fact, a \$250,000 advertisement for a new Jeep 4 x 4. As Kevin Delaney writes, "Some consumers who ignore TV commercials, it turns out, will eagerly play with a commercial dressed up as a video game" (2004, p. A8).

So, why did this baby boomer enumeration approve of product placements, which are ever more becoming cleverly disguised commercials, but disapprove of advertisers writing scripts for television shows? Why do they not care about product placements, but agree that it is important to them to know how advertisers may be influencing the entertainment content they enjoy? The answer may lie in another finding of the present study.

Sixty percent of subjects supported product placements as a means of inserting realism into television shows. Television has been firmly established as a constructor of social reality (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Lang & Lang, 1984; Schramm, Lyle, & Parker,

1961). Product placements have been understood as engineers of reality (Solomon & Englis, 1994), and “hybrid messages” that “... project a non-commercial character” (Balasubramanian, 1994, p. 30). For better or worse, we live in a branded world. In order for television to continue to communicate social reality, it must reflect the world it mimics, and this world includes brands. Further, people gather their perceptions of the world around them from, among other sources, television (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Lang & Lang, 1984). If the televised world contained no brands, it would cease to be a credible constructor of social reality.

People are used to turning to television to help them gain an understanding of the world around them. Effective product placements compliment television’s role of communicating reality by inserting real brands into fictional situations, thereby making the constructed world behind the glass more believable. Product placements are processed by the audience, as Balasubramanian describes, “differently than other commercial messages” (1994, p. 30). When they don’t look or feel like commercials, they are not received as commercials. This explains why product placements were accepted in general by the present baby boomer generation, but the idea of advertisers writing scripts for television shows, was not. It also explains why subjects’ don’t care about product placements, but do care about the way advertisers may be influencing entertainment content.

Often, product placements are not received as commercials. Subjects realize that advertisers helping to write television scripts smells like advertising and, in theory, reject it. However, when this method is executed perfectly, how can the viewer tell the difference between a mere product placement and a show whose entire plot has been derived by an advertiser? When it is done correctly, there should be no way to tell whether Diet Coke paid to place a can of its carbonated beverage into the hand of the main character, or whether it paid to devise that character and the entire fictional world it lives and operates in. As long as placements remain subtle and compliment the plot, there is no way for consumers to know that an advertiser has written the script of their favorite TV show, unless of course, they are recognized in the credits.

Methodological Limitations

There are methodological limitations to the present study. First, the enumeration used in this study, although generally representative of the national American baby boomer population regarding age distribution, was drawn from one company. While it is known that Douglas County is an excellent area from which to draw a baby boomer sample because of its representativeness, and the subjects chosen reside and/or work in Douglas County, the fact that they all work for the same company could have influenced the results. For example, had a representative sample been randomly drawn from a variety of businesses and/or households in the Douglas County area, there would have been more men, more ethnic minorities and perhaps a greater variety of educational backgrounds included in the survey. These factors may or may not result in different

conclusions, but more importantly, it is not known if the culture of the company played any factor in determining the results of the present study. While results should still be extendable to the baby boomer population overall, further studies, employing a more representative base, are needed to confirm or challenge the results discovered here.

Implications and Future Research Opportunities

Theoretical Implications: One critical theorist extends his concern over the deceptive influence of product placements to the realm of imagination arguing that the commercialism rampant in the entertainment industry makes it impossible for people to conceive of a reality that does not include branded products.

In a product placement-infused media entertainment, the possibility of imagining a world that is not branded, or one where the values associated with brands are distinctly different than the brand purveyors would like us to believe, becomes something that is beyond the pale (Wenner, 2004, p. 127).

When considered through the lens of the social construction of reality theory, Wenner's concern raises an important question about the ability of the mass media, and television in particular to act as a social constructor, not only of reality but of imagination as well. Of particular interest is Wenner's argument against the realism-enhancing function of product placement. After noting that the vast majority of placements put their brand in a positive light, Wenner states that "a reality that shows the branded portion of our world in unyielding positive light is a false one" (2004, p. 124). Wenner notes that in reality, cigarettes, cars and fast food do not always yield positive effects or commentary.

As earlier research on television as a social constructor of reality has shown it to give viewers unrealistic perceptions regarding crime, future research would do well to examine the role television and films play in forming peoples' perceptions of branded products. It would be interesting to consider, for example, if peoples' ideas about fast food or cigarette brands are positively influenced by product placements, and if any connection exists between exposure to product placements and viewers' willingness to use or recommend those products. Product placements may well be the bridge that is able to extend the social construction of reality theory beyond its current bounds of consciousness into the realm of imagination.

Additionally, from a critical perspective, it is important to consider the motivation behind the consumer apathy towards product placements revealed in this study. Future research should examine, from a more interpretive approach, non-student populations' attitudes towards product placements. Specifically, a research study employing one-on-one and focus group interviews would allow a more thorough understanding of subjects' knowledge, awareness, perceptions and possible objections to product placements than the current, more quantitatively-oriented format provided. An interview format would allow for more thorough descriptions of current trends in the practice of product placement and subjects' reactions to them.

Practical implications: This study offers preliminary evidence to advertisers and product placement practitioners that a wider portion of the population is not terribly offended by the inclusion of product placements in the entertainment programs they consume. While more research is needed to examine representative samples of American

baby boomers, the current study confirmed other studies conducted with college students that most individuals do not object to the presence of product placements in the entertainment media. With the exception of placing products in television and movie content aimed at children and minors, subjects in this study largely had no objections to product placement. Future research is needed to confirm these findings among other representative samples of non-student populations, but based off the extant literature, and the findings of the present study, advertisers should feel no imperative from consumers to reform the practice of product placement by placing regulations or restrictions upon it. Time will tell if the ever-increasing proliferation of product placements in digital information formats as well as more traditional mass media vehicles will result in consumer backlash. But, for now, there is no public outcry against product placement. In fact, as far as current research can tell, there is not even a murmur of rebellion.

Conclusion

The current study revealed an overall attitude, not of enthusiasm, nor of disgust, but rather apathy towards product placements. While no link was established between frequency of consumption and moral approval or disapproval of product placements, open-ended feedback comments did reveal a smattering of concern over the co-creation of entertainment content that is increasingly prevalent in mass media vehicles today. The majority of subjects approved of product placements in all media formats examined (movies, television, music videos, video games and internet web sites). No difference in opinion was found among age groups within the enumeration. When disapproval of

product placements was voiced, it was towards the inclusion of alcohol or tobacco products in entertainment content aimed at children. Overall, the research in this study strengthened the findings of previous studies examining college students' attitudes towards product placements.

As new media formats emerge in our increasingly digital environment, product placements will undoubtedly be a part of them. Advertisers will most likely rely on product placements as an even more important factor in their marketing mix and brand owners will continue to search for ways to break through the advertising clutter and more effectively communicate their brand to their target audiences. However, as we forge ahead into an arguably overcommercialized culture for the foreseeable future, the limits of product placement will be tested. Advertisers and academics alike should not wait for public outcry to force a critical examination of the practice of product placement. Research efforts should be directed towards determining the extent of citizens' knowledge of co-creation activities by advertisers and entertainment producers and subsequently, their attitudes towards that practice. The question of how product placements may influence citizens' perceptions of reality as well as their imaginations must be examined in order to expand our understanding of how we are all affected by life in an increasingly commodified American and even, global culture.

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Appendix A

NEBRASKA'S HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA)

April 21, 2004

Nicole Schmoll
4121 North 64 Street
Omaha NE 68104

IRB#: 153-04-EX

TITLE OF PROTOCOL: Constructing Reality: Baby Boomers' Attitudes Towards Product Placements in the Mass Media

Dear Ms. Schmoll:

The IRB has reviewed your Exemption Form for the above-titled research project. According to the information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:101b, category 2. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines. It is also understood that the IRB will be immediately notified of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project.

Please be advised that the IRB has a maximum protocol approval period of three years from the original date of approval and release. If this study continues beyond the three year approval period, the project must be resubmitted in order to maintain an active approval status.

Sincerely,

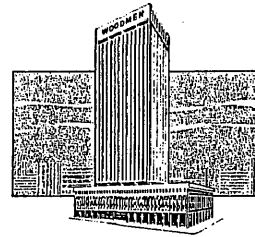
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ernest Prentice, PhD / BSK".

Ernest D. Prentice, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, IRB

EDP/gdk

Appendix B

**WOODMEN OF THE WORLD/OMAHA WOODMEN
LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY**
HOME OFFICE: OMAHA, NEBRASKA



1700 FARNAM STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102
TELEPHONE (402) 342-1890

March 31, 2004

Institutional Review Board
Service Building 3000
987830 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-7930

To Whom it May Concern:

Nicole Schmoll has been granted approval to conduct a survey of employees at the home office of Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Society, located in Omaha, Nebraska. Her survey will contain a cover letter acknowledging her as a Master's student pursuing her thesis research for the School of Communications at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The survey will be given to employees who are aged 40 – 58 and it is understood that responses given will remain anonymous in any analysis or presentation of results. Since the survey topic concerns employees' opinions of product placements in the mass media, it is not anticipated to cause any harm or discomfort to those who wish to complete it..

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joseph L. Hromadka'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph L. Hromadka
Vice President
and General Office Manager

Appendix C



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Department of Communication
Broadcasting Journalism Speech

June 7, 2004

Dear Woodmen Home Office Associate:

Hello, my name is Nicole Schmoll and I work in the Communications Division here at Woodmen. I am currently enrolled as a graduate student in the School of Communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. To complete my Master's thesis, I am researching product placements in the mass media.

You have been selected to receive the attached survey. Your opinion is important! This research focuses on your attitudes about product placement. Your participation is voluntary and will take less than 5 minutes of your time. All responses will be kept anonymous. Please complete the attached survey and return it to me by Friday, June 18, in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nicole Schmoll".

Nicole Schmoll

Appendix D

News Item

Survey Announcement

Nicole Schmoll (Comm.), a graduate student in the School of Communication at UNO, is working to complete her master's thesis. She is researching product placement in the entertainment media and needs your assistance. Home Office associates will be selected at random to participate in a short survey, which will be distributed via inner-office mail on Monday, June 7. Your participation is voluntary and should take less than five minutes of your time. All responses will be kept anonymous.

Keep your eyes open for a survey in your inbox next Monday!

Pre-notification #1: Ran on June 4, 2004

News Item

Survey Reminder

Nicole Schmoll (Comm.), a graduate student in the School of Communication at UNO, is working to complete her master's thesis -- she is researching product placement in the entertainment media. You may be selected at random to participate in a short survey, which will be distributed via inner-office mail later today (June 7). Your participation is voluntary and should take less than five minutes of your time. All responses will be kept anonymous.

Keep your eyes open for a survey in your inbox later today!

Pre-notification #2: Ran on June 7, 2004

News Item

Survey Reminder

If you received a survey regarding product placement, but haven't had a chance to complete it, there's still time -- you have until Friday, June 18. Your opinion is important and it'll help a fellow associate -- Nicole Schmoll (Comm.), a graduate student in the School of Communication at UNO, who is working to complete her master's thesis by researching product placement in the entertainment media. If you need another survey, contact Nicole at Ext. 7902.

NOTE: Nicole would like to thank everyone who has already completed a survey.

Reminder #1: Ran on June 10, 2004

News Item

Survey Reminder

If you received a survey regarding product placement, but haven't had a chance to complete it, there's still time -- you have until Friday, June 18. Your opinion is important and it'll help a fellow associate -- Nicole Schmoll (Comm.), a graduate student in the School of Communication at UNO, who is working to complete her master's thesis by researching product placement in the entertainment media. If you need another survey, contact Nicole at Ext. 7902.

NOTE: Nicole would like to thank everyone who has already completed a survey.

Reminder #2: Ran on June 17, 2004

Appendix E



Product Placement in the Entertainment Media

Your opinion is important! This research focuses on YOUR attitudes about product placement in the entertainment media. This survey will take less than five minutes to complete and your responses will be kept anonymous. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

“Product placement” means that on many occasions, real brand-name products (as opposed to fake or generic products) are included in movies, television shows, music videos, video games and in websites on the Internet. These products can be anything from a can of soda to a child’s game or an automobile, and are shown either in the background or being used by a character. Often, these brand-name products are included in return for money or promotional benefits from the product’s manufacturer to the show’s producers. This practice is known as ‘product placement.’

Please respond to each statement presented below. A list of numbers ranging from 1 – 5 is placed next to each statement. Please mark the number that best represents your opinion according to the following scale:

1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = disagree; 5 = strongly disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I prefer to see real brands in movies rather than fake/fictitious brands.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Use of brand-name tobacco and alcohol products should be banned from PG and PG-13 rated movies.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I care about product placements.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. It is important to me to know how advertisers may be influencing entertainment content.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I will not go to a movie if I know beforehand that brands are placed prominently in the movie for commercial purposes.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The placement of brands in movies should be completely banned.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I frequently watch movies in theaters	1	2	3	4	5
8. I frequently watch television.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The presence of brand-name products in a television show makes it more realistic.	1	2	3	4	5
10. It is okay for advertisers to help write scripts for television shows.	1	2	3	4	5
11. It is okay for musicians to be paid to wear or use brand-name products in their music videos.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I frequently watch music videos on television.	1	2	3	4	5
13. It is okay for advertisers to pay to have brand-name products included in video games	1	2	3	4	5
14. I frequently play video games on the computer or on gaming systems such as PlayStation®, Xbox® or GameCube®.	1	2	3	4	5
15. It is okay for advertisers to pay to have their brands included on various websites on the Internet.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I frequently use the Internet to access websites for entertainment and/or information purposes.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. I would consider product placements as "commercials in disguise."	1	2	3	4	5

Here are a few demographic questions. This information will be used for descriptive purposes in the analysis of the aggregated data and will be kept anonymous.

18. What year you were born? 19 ____

19. What is your gender? ☐ Female ☐ Male

20. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ High School
☐ Junior College/Technical or Professional School
☐ Four-year College
☐ Graduate School or higher

21. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ African American
☐ Caucasian/White
☐ Native American
☐ Asian
☐ Hispanic (non-white origin)
☐ Other

22. Do you have children or grand children under the age of 18?
 Yes ____ No ____

For item 23, please write down anything else that you would like to share about product placements.

23. I have the following comments to add about product placements:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses are valuable and will be kept anonymous. Please return your completed survey in the envelope provided.

Appendix F

Tables Pertaining to Hypothesis 1

MOVIES

Chi-Square Table – Movies – Pair 1 (Items 1 & 7)

Movies – Pair 1	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.755(a)	16	.003
Likelihood Ratio	37.404	16	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.584	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	264		

a 10 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .42.

Chi-Square Table – Movies – Pair 2 (Items 2 & 7)

Movies – Pair 2	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.841(a)	16	.019
Likelihood Ratio	24.859	16	.072
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.880	1	.170
N of Valid Cases	264		

a 9 cells (36.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .75.

Chi-Square Table – Movies – Pair 3 (Items 5 & 7)

Movies – Pair 3	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.590(a)	16	.035
Likelihood Ratio	26.067	16	.053
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.628	1	.057
N of Valid Cases	264		

a 10 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.

Chi-Square Table – Movies Pair 4 (Items 6 & 7)

Movies – Pair 4	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.657(a)	16	.008
Likelihood Ratio	28.317	16	.029
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.705	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	263		

a 12 cells (48.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .33.

Paired Samples T-test Movies Pair 1

Items 1 & 7		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	I prefer to see real brands in movies rather than fake/fictitious brands.	2.36	264	.916	.056
	I frequently watch movies in theaters.	3.05	264	1.172	.072

Paired Samples T-Test Movies Pair 2

Items 2 & 7		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Use of brand-name tobacco and alcohol products should be banned from PG and PG-13 rated movies.	2.11	264	1.163	.072
	I frequently watch movies in theaters.	3.05	264	1.172	.072

Paired Samples T-test Movies Pair 3

Items 5 & 7		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 3	I will not go to a movie if I know beforehand that brands are placed prominently in the movie for commercial purposes.	3.93	264	.806	.050
	I frequently watch movies in theaters.	3.05	264	1.172	.072

Paired Samples T-Test Movies Pair 4

Items 6 & 7		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 4	The placement of brands in movies should be completely banned.	3.75	263	.840	.052
	I frequently watch movies in theaters.	3.04	263	1.173	.072

Correlation Values – Movies – Pair 1 (Items 1 & 7)

Movies – Pair 1		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.243	.061	4.062	.000(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.264	.060	4.436	.000(c)
N of Valid Cases		264			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

Correlation Values – Movies – Pair 2 (Items 2 & 7)

Movies – Pair 2		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.085	.065	-1.373	.171(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.062	.064	-1.001	.318(c)
N of Valid Cases		264			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

Correlation Values – Movies – Pair 3 (Items 5 & 7)

Movies – Pair 3		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.117	.060	-1.914	.057(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.137	.061	-2.234	.026(c)
N of Valid Cases		264			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

Correlation Values – Movies – Pair 4 (Items 6 & 7)

Movies – Pair 4		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.171	.061	-2.812	.005(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.195	.062	-3.215	.001(c)
N of Valid Cases		263			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

TELEVISION

Chi-Square Table – Television – Pair 1 (Items 8 & 9)

Television – Pair 1	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.492(a)	16	.062
Likelihood Ratio	24.774	16	.074
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.962	1	.026
N of Valid Cases	263		

a. 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .06.

Chi-Square Table – Television- Pair 2 (Items 8 & 10)

Television – Pair 2	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.841(a)	16	.990
Likelihood Ratio	7.445	16	.964
Linear-by-Linear Association	.920	1	.337
N of Valid Cases	263		

a. 12 cells (48.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

Paired Samples T-test Television Pair 1

Items 8 & 9		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	I frequently watch television.	2.20	263	1.015	.063
	The presence of brand-name products in a television show makes it more realistic.	2.45	263	.975	.060

Paired Samples T-test Pair 2

Items 8 & 10		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	I frequently watch television.	2.20	263	1.015	.063
	It is okay for advertisers to help write scripts for television shows.	3.49	263	.920	.057

Correlation Values – Television – Pair 1

Television – Items 8 & 9		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.138	.057	2.245	.026(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.166	.061	2.725	.007(c)
N of Valid Cases		263			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

Correlation Values – Television – Pair 2

Television – Items 8 & 10		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.059	.056	.959	.338(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.047	.060	.764	.446(c)
N of Valid Cases		263			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

MUSIC VIDEOS

Chi-Square Table – Music Videos (Items 11 & 12)

Music Videos	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.623(a)	16	.003
Likelihood Ratio	36.862	16	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.104	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	264		

a 14 cells (56.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .24.

Paired Samples T-test Music Videos

Items 11 & 12		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	It is okay for musicians to be paid to wear or use brand-name products in their music videos.	2.71	264	.878	.054
	I frequently watch music videos on television.	3.79	264	1.085	.067

Correlation Values – Music Videos

Music Videos		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.247	.059	4.134	.000(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.235	.061	3.909	.000(c)
N of Valid Cases		264			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c Based on normal approximation.

VIDEO GAMES

Chi-Square Table – Video Games (Items 13 & 14)

Video Games	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.991 (a)	16	.269
Likelihood Ratio	20.572	16	.196
Linear-by-Linear Association	.020	1	.887
N of Valid Cases	264		

a. 14 cells (56.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .15.

Paired Samples T-test Video Games

Items 13 & 14		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	It is okay for advertisers to pay to have brand-name products included in video games.	2.88	264	.929	.057
	I frequently play video games on the computer or on gaming systems such as PlayStation, Xbox, or GameCube.	4.31	264	.991	.061

Correlation Values – Video Games

Video Games		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.009	.060	.142	.887(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.016	.060	-.256	.798(c)
N of Valid Cases		264			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

INTERNET

Chi-Square Table – Internet (Items 15 & 16)

Internet	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	49.508(a)	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	44.422	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.663	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	264		

a. 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .89.

Paired Samples T-test Internet

Items 15 & 16		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	It is okay for advertisers to pay to have their brands included on various web sites on the Internet.	2.64	264	.929	.057
	I frequently use the Internet to access web sites for entertainment and/or information purposes.	2.39	264	1.158	.071

Correlation Values - Internet

Internet		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.219	.064	3.640	.000(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.273	.061	4.588	.000(c)
N of Valid Cases		264			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Tables Pertaining to Hypothesis 3

H3 – ANOVA

Oneway ANOVA – Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max	Btw. Comp. Var.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
I care about product placements.	oldest	26	2.88	.909	.178	2.52	3.25	1	5	
	old	55	2.69	.979	.132	2.43	2.96	1	5	
	young	78	2.81	.666	.075	2.66	2.96	1	5	
	youngest	91	2.88	.743	.078	2.72	3.03	1	5	
	Total	250	2.82	.795	.050	2.72	2.92	1	5	
	Model	Fixed Effects		.797	.050	2.72	2.92			
		Random Effects			.050(a)	2.66(a)	2.98(a)			-.003
It is important to me to know how advertisers may be influencing entertainment content.	oldest	26	2.12	.653	.128	1.85	2.38	1	3	
	old	56	2.48	.991	.132	2.22	2.75	1	5	
	young	77	2.35	.684	.078	2.20	2.51	1	4	
	youngest	92	2.52	.883	.092	2.34	2.70	1	4	
	Total	251	2.42	.837	.053	2.31	2.52	1	5	
	Model	Fixed Effects		.832	.053	2.31	2.52			
		Random Effects			.076	2.18	2.66			.010
I would consider product placements as "commercials in disguise."	oldest	26	2.50	.812	.159	2.17	2.83	1	4	
	old	56	2.07	.988	.132	1.81	2.34	1	5	
	young	77	2.27	.868	.099	2.08	2.47	1	5	
	youngest	93	2.25	1.007	.104	2.04	2.45	1	5	
	Total	252	2.24	.945	.060	2.12	2.36	1	5	
	Model	Fixed Effects		.944	.059	2.12	2.36			
		Random Effects			.069	2.02	2.46			.004

a Warning: Between-component variance is negative. It was replaced by 0.0 in computing this random effects measure.